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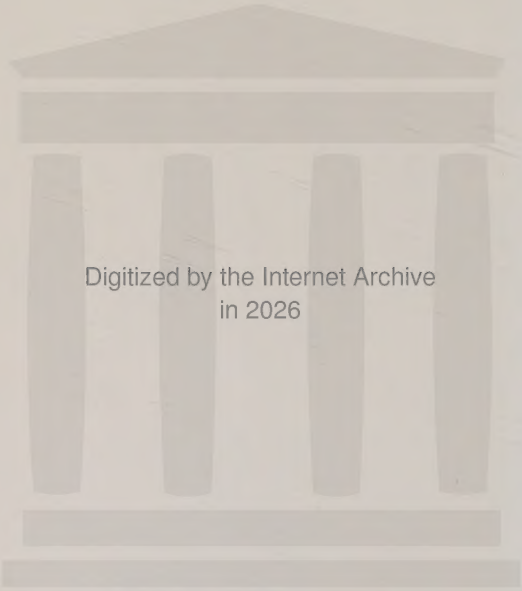

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THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, M.A., LL.D.

Editor of "The Expositor"

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London: Hodder and Stoughton
1908

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

BY THE REV.

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PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, AND VICAR OF ALL SAINTS', BLACKROCK.

VOLUME I.

NEW YORK
A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON
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PREFACE.

THIS volume contains an exposition of the Acts of the Apostles down to, but not including, the conversion of St. Paul and the baptism of Cornelius. There is a natural division at that point. Prior to these events, the inspired narrative is engaged with what the late Bishop Lightfoot of Durham called great "representative facts," prophetical or typical of the future developments of the Church, whether among Jews or Gentiles;[1] while the subsequent course of the history deals almost entirely with missionary work among the heathen and the labours of St. Paul.[2]

We are dependent for the story of these earliest days of the Church's life upon the Acts of the Apostles. I have endeavoured, however, to illustrate the narrative by copious references to ancient documents, some of which may appear of dubious value and authority, such as the *Acts of the Saints* and the writings of the mediæval Greek hagiologist, Simeon Metaphrastes, who lived in the tenth century.[3] The latter writer has been hitherto regarded as more famous for his imagi-

[1] See the treatise on the Christian Ministry in his *Philippians*, p. 186.

[2] Dr. Goulburn, in his *Acts of the Deacons*, suggested this view of the Acts of the Apostles nearly thirty years ago.

[3] For an account of Simeon Metaphrastes the English reader should consult Dr. Schaff's valuable *Encyclopædia of Historical Theology*.

nation than for his historical accuracy. This age of ours is a noted one, however, for clearing characters previously regarded as very doubtful, and Simeon Metaphrastes has come in for his own share of this process of rehabilitation. The distinguished writer just referred to, Dr. Lightfoot, as we have shown in a note on p. 218, has proved that Metaphrastes embodied in his works valuable early records, dating back to the second century, which in critical hands can shed much light upon primitive Christian history.[1] In fact, students of Holy Scripture and of early Christianity are learning every day to look more and more to ancient Greek, Syriac, and Armenian writers, and to the libraries of the Eastern Churches, for fresh light on these important subjects. It is only natural we should do so. Writers like Simeon Metaphrastes and Photius, the student Patriarch of Constantinople, lived a thousand years nearer the apostolic times than we do. They flourished in an age of the highest civilization, when precious literary works, in hundreds and thousands, which are no longer known amongst us, lay all around them and at their command. These men and their friends gathered them up and extracted them, and common sense alone teaches that a critical study of their writings will reveal to us somewhat of the treasures they possessed. The libraries of the East again form a great field for investigation. During the last fifty years we have paid some little attention to them, which has been amply rewarded. The recovery of the complete works

[1] See Professor Ramsay on "The Tale of Saint Abercius" in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. iii., p. 338, for a full account of this new source of early Church history which his travels and excavations have brought to our notice.

of Hippolytus and of Clement of Rome, the discovery of the *Teaching of the Apostles* and of the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, are only specimens of what we may yet hope to exhume from the dust of ages.

The testimony, too, borne by these finds has been of the greatest importance. The *Diatessaron* alone has formed the most triumphant reply to the argument against the Gospels, specially against St. John's Gospel, formulated some years ago by the author of *Supernatural Religion*. And the process of discovery is still going on. I have said something in the notes to the final lecture of the present volume concerning the latest discovery of this kind which throws some light upon the composition of the Acts. I refer to the lost *Apology* of Aristides, which has just been brought to light. Let me very briefly tell its story and show its bearing on the age and date of the Acts. Eusebius, the historian of the fourth century, mentions in his *Chronicle*, under the year 124, the two earliest apologies written in defence of Christianity; one by Quadratus, a hearer of the Apostles, the other by Aristides, a philosopher of Athens. Now this year 124 was about twenty years after St. John's death. These apologies have hitherto been best known by this historian's notice, though Eusebius says they were widely circulated in his time. The *Apology* or defence of Aristides has often been sought for. In the seventeenth century it was said to have been extant in a monastery near Athens,[1] but no Western had ever seen it in a complete shape in modern times. Two years ago, however, Professor J. Rendel Harris, M.A., of Cambridge and of Haverford College, Pennsylvania,

[1] Ceillier, *Hist. des Auteurs Ecclésiastiques*, i., 403.

discovered it in a Syriac version in the library of the convent of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai, whence he has published it with an English translation in a new series of *Texts and Studies in Biblical and Patristic Literature*, the first number of which has appeared at Cambridge within the last few weeks.[1]

I need not go farther into the story of the recovery of this document, which raises high our expectations of others still more interesting. The *Apology* of Quadratus would be even more important, as it bore direct testimony to the miracles of our Lord. The brief extract from it which Eusebius gives in his *History*, book iv., chap. 3, proves how precious would be the complete work. "The deeds of our Saviour, says Quadratus, were always before you, for they were true; those that were healed, those that were raised from the dead, who were seen, not only when healed

[1] Mr. Harris's discovery is not the first find of this ancient apologist in modern times. The Armenian Mechitarites of Venice published what they called two sermons of Aristides in 1878; which Cardinal Pitra, the learned librarian of the Vatican, reprinted in 1883, in his *Analecta Sacra*, t. iv., pp. x, xi, 6-11, 282-86. One of these sermons was a fragment of the *Apology* of Aristides, which the Mechitarites scarcely at first recognised as such. M. Rénan, in his *Origines de Christianisme*, vol. vi., p. vi (Paris, 1879), scoffed at this fragment, declaring that, from the technical theological terms, such as Theotokos, therein used, it was evidently posterior to the fourth century. Doulcet, in the *Revue des Questions Historiques* for October 1880, pp. 601-12, made an effective reply with the materials at hand at the time; but Mr. Harris's publication of the complete work triumphantly demonstrates that M. Rénan's objections were worthless (see Harris, pp. 2, 3, 27). It is another proof that Christians have everything to hope and nothing to fear from such discoveries of early documents. Mr. Harris's preface is specially interesting, because it shows that we have had the *Apology* of Aristides all the time, though we knew it not, as it was worked up in the quasi-oriental tale of Barlaam and Joasaph printed among the works of St. John of Damascus.

and when raised, but were always present. They remained for a long time, not only whilst the Saviour was sojourning with us, but likewise when He had been removed. So that some of them have also survived to our own times."

In the *Apology* of Quadratus we should obtain a picture of the popular theology of the Church during that dark period which elapsed between the days of Clement of Rome and Ignatius, and those of Justin Martyr. The *Apology* of Aristides which has been found reveals something indeed in the same direction, but is more occupied with an attack upon paganism than in a statement of the Christian faith. Here, however, consists its bearing on the Acts of the Apostles, not directly, but by way of contrast. Let me explain what I mean. In lecture xvii., when treating of the story of Simon Magus, I have shown how the simple narrative of the Acts concerning that man became elaborated in the second century till it formed at last a regular romance; whence I conclude that if the Acts had been written in the second century the story of Simon Magus would not be the simple matter we read in St. Luke's narrative. Now our argument for the date of the Acts derived from the *Apology* of Aristides is of much the same kind. This document shows us what the tone and substance of second century addresses to the pagans were. It is the earliest of a series of apologies extending over the whole of that century. The *Apology* of Aristides, the numerous writings of Justin Martyr, specially the *Oratio* and the *Cohortatio ad Græcos* attributed to him, the *Oration* of Tatian addressed to the Greeks, the *Apologeticus* and the treatise *Ad Nationes* of Tertullian, the *Epistle to Diognetus*, the writings of Athenagoras,

all deal with the same topics, the theories and absurdities of Greek philosophy, the immoral character of the pagan deities, and the purity of Christian doctrine and practice.[1] If the Acts of the Apostles had been composed in the second century, the address of St. Paul to the Athenians would have been very different from what it is, and must necessarily have partaken of those characteristics which we find common to all the numerous treatises addressed to the heathen world of that date. If the Acts were written in the second century, why does not the writer put arguments into St. Paul's mouth like those which were current among the Christian apologists of that time? The philosophical argument of Aristides, which is followed by Justin Martyr[2] and the later apologists, when contrasted with the simplicity of St. Paul, is a conclusive proof of the early date of the composition of the Acts.[3] But this is not the only argument of this kind which modern research furnishes. Aristides shows us what the character of Christian controversy with the pagans was in the generation succeeding the Apostles. We can draw the same conclusion when we examine

[1] The apologists of the second century will be found in a collected shape in Otto's *Corpus Apologetarum*, in nine vols. (Jena, 1842-72). Most of those mentioned above will be found in an English shape in Clarke's Ante-Nicene Library. See also Harnack in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, bd. i., hft. i. (Leipzig, 1882).

[2] St. Jerome, in *Ep.* 70, addressed to Magnus, a Roman rhetorician, expressly says that Justin Martyr imitated Aristides. The *Cohortatio ad Græcos* attributed to him is much liker the treatise of Aristides than Justin's admitted first and second apologies.

[3] Overbeck, Zeller, and Schwegler fix the composition of the Acts between 110 and 130, the very date of the *Apology* of Aristides. See Zeller's *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 71 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1875).

Christian controversy as carried on against the Jews of the same period.

We have a number of treatises directed against the Jews by Christian writers of the second century: the *Dialogue* of Justin Martyr with Trypho the Jew, of Jason and Papiscus, and the treatise of Tertullian directed *Ad Judæos*. When compared with one another we find that the staple arguments of these writings are much the same.[1] They were evidently framed upon the model of St. Stephen's address at Jerusalem, of St. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia, and of the Epistle to the Galatians. They deal with the transitory and temporary character of the Jewish law, they enter very largely into the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and they notice Jewish objections. The second century works are, however, elaborate treatises, dealing with a great controversy in a manner which experience had showed to be far the most effective and telling. The Jewish controversy in the Acts, whether in the mouth of St. Peter, St. Stephen, or St. Paul, is treated in a much simpler way. The speakers think, speak, write, like men who are making their first essays in controversy, and have no experience of others to guide them. Had the Acts been written in the second century, the writer must have composed the addresses to the Jews as well as those to the Gentiles after the model of the age when he was writing. The more carefully, however, we

[1] For an account of the Jewish controversy in the second century see Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte*, bd. i., hft. 3 (Leipzig, 1883), where Harnack seeks to critically restore the substance of the dialogue between Jason and Papiscus. An article on "Apologists" in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. i., pp. 140-47, and another on "Theophilus" (13) in the same work, vol. iv., p. 1009, should be consulted.

examine and contrast these two controversies, as conducted in the Acts and in the writings of the second century respectively, the more thoroughly shall we be convinced of the apostolic date of St. Luke's narrative, of its genuine character, and of its historic worth.

I have written this book from my own standpoint as a decided Churchman, but I hope that I have said nothing which can really hurt the feelings of any one who thinks otherwise, or which may tend to widen those differences between Christians which are such a terrible hindrance to the cause of true religion and its progress in the world.

I have tried to use the Revised Version consistently throughout my expositions, but I fear that my attempt has been but vain. In my formal quotations I think I have succeeded. But then, in commenting upon Scripture, a writer constantly refers to and quotes passages without formal reference. Here is where I must have failed. The Authorized Version is so bound up with all our earliest thoughts and associations that its language unconsciously colours all our ideas and expressions. Any one who at present makes such an attempt as I have done will find illustrated in himself the phenomena which we behold in writings of the fifth and sixth centuries. St. Jerome published a Revised Version of the Latin translation of the Scripture about the year 400 A.D. For hundreds of years afterwards Latin writers are found using indiscriminately the old Latin and the new Latin translations. St. Patrick's *Confession*, for instance, was composed about the middle of the fifth century. Quotations from both versions of the New Testament are found in that document, affording a conclusive indication of its date;

just as the mixture of the Revised and Authorized Versions will form a prominent feature in theological works composed towards the close of the nineteenth century.

I have to acknowledge the kind assistance of the Rev. H. W. Burgess, LL.D., who has patiently read all my proofs, and called my attention to many a solecism or mistake which might have otherwise disfigured my pages; and of Mr. W. Etienne Phelps, B.A., deputy keeper of Primate Marsh's Library, who has compiled the index.

GEORGE T. STOKES.

ALL SAINTS' VICARAGE, BLACKROCK,
May 27th, 1891.

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"The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment through the Holy Ghost unto the apostles whom He had chosen."—ACTS i. 1, 2.

THESE words constitute the very brief preface which the writer thought sufficient for the earliest ecclesiastical history ever produced in the Church of God. Let us imitate him in his brevity and conciseness, and without further delay enter upon the consideration of a book which raises vital questions and involves all-important issues.

Now when a plain man comes to the consideration of this book one question naturally strikes him at once: How do I know who wrote this book, or when it was written? What evidence or guarantee have I for its authentic character? To these questions we shall apply ourselves in the present chapter.

The title of the book as given in our Bibles does not offer us much help. The title varies in different manuscripts and in different ancient authors. Some writers of the second century who touched upon apostolic times call it by the name our Bibles retain, The Acts of the Apostles; others call it The Acts of the Holy Apostles, or at times simply The Acts. This title

of "Acts" was indeed a very common one, in the second and third centuries, for a vast variety of writings purporting to tell the story of apostolic lives, as an abundance of extant apocryphal documents amply proves. The Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Acts of St. Thomas, of St. Peter, and of St. John, were imitations, doubtless, of the well-known name by which our canonical book was then called. Imitation is universally acknowledged to be the sincerest form of flattery, and the imitation of the title and form of our book is an evidence of its superior claim and authority. One of the oldest of these apocryphal Acts is a document celebrated in Christian antiquity as the Acts of Paul and Thecla. We know all about its origin. It was forged about the year 180 or 200 by a presbyter of Asia Minor who was an enthusiastic admirer of the Apostle St. Paul. But when we take up the narrative and read it, with its absurd legends and its manifold touches and realistic scenes drawn from the persecutions of the second century, and well known to every student of the original records of those times, we can at a glance see what the canonical Acts of the Apostles would have been had the composition been postponed to the end of the second century. The Acts of Paul and Thecla are useful, then, as illustrating, by way of contrast in title and in substance, the genuine Acts of the New Testament which they imitated.[1]

But then, some one might say, how do we know that the genuine Acts of the Apostles existed prior to the

[1] See a copious account of this strange second-century forgery in Dr. Gwynne's article on Thecla in the fourth volume of the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*. Dr. Salmon, in his *Introduction to the N.T.*, chap. xix., gives a most interesting description of the apocrypha Acts of the Apostles, which even the unlearned can enjoy.

Acts of Paul and Thecla and the time of Tertullian, who first mentions these apocryphal Acts, and tells us of their forged origin? The answer to that query is easy enough. Yet it will require a somewhat copious statement in order to exhibit its full force, its convincing power.

Tertullian is a writer who connects the age of apostolic men, as we may call the men who knew the Apostles—Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement of Rome, and such like—with the third century. Tertullian was born about the middle of the second century, and he lived till the third century was well advanced. He was one of those persons whose chronological position enables them to transmit historical facts and details from one critical point to another. Let me illustrate what I mean by a modern example. Every unprejudiced thinker will acknowledge that the Rev. John Wesley was a man who exercised an extraordinary religious influence. He not only originated a vast community of world-wide extent, which calls itself after his name, but he also imparted a tremendous impetus to spiritual life and work in the Church of England. After the departure of Mr. Wesley from this life his mantle fell upon a certain number of his leading followers, men like Adam Clarke, the commentator; Jabez Bunting, the organizer of modern Wesleyanism; Thomas Coke, Robert Newton, and Richard Watson, the author of the *Institutes of Theology*. Several of these men lived far into this century, and there are at the present day thousands still alive who recollect some of them, while there are many still alive who can recollect all of them. Now let us draw a parallel with all reverence, and yet with perfect fairness. John Wesley began his life at the beginning of the eighteenth century as our Lord

began His human life at the beginning of the first century. John Wesley's immediate disciples perpetuated their lives till the middle of the present century. Our Lord's apostles and immediate followers perpetuated their lives in some cases till well into the second century. At the close of the nineteenth century there are hundreds, to say the least, who remember Adam Clarke and Thomas Coke, who in turn were personally acquainted with John Wesley. In the last quarter of the second century there must have been many still alive—apostolic men, I have called them—whose youthful memories could bear them back to the days when the Apostle St. John, and men like St. Mark, and St. Luke, and St. Ignatius, still testified what they had personally seen and heard and known. Why, the simple fact is this, that in the year 1950 there will be still living numerous persons who will be able to say that they have personally known many individuals who were the friends and acquaintances of John Wesley's immediate disciples. Four long lives of ninety years, the one overlapping the other, will easily cover three centuries of time.

Let us dwell a little more on this point, for it bears very directly on Tertullian's witness, not only to the canon of the New Testament, but also to the whole round of Christian doctrine. It is simply wonderful what vast tracts of time can be covered by human memory even at the present day, when that faculty has lost so much of its power for want of exercise, owing to the printing-press. I can give a striking instance from my own knowledge. There is at present an acquaintance of mine living in this city of Dublin where I write. He is hale and hearty, and able still to take the keenest interest in the affairs of religion

and of politics. He is about ninety-five years of age, and he has told me within the last twelve months that he remembers quite well a grand-aunt of his born in the reign of Queen Anne, who used to tell him all the incidents connected with the earliest visits of John and Charles Wesley to Ireland about 1745. If Tertullian's experience was anything like my own, he may quite easily have known persons at Rome or elsewhere who had heard the tale of St. Paul's preaching, labour, and miracles from the very men whom the Apostle had converted at Antioch, Damascus, and Rome. I can give a more striking instance still, which any reader can verify for himself. Mr. S. C. Hall was a writer known far and wide for the last seventy years. About the middle of this century Mr. Hall was at the height of his popularity, though he only passed to the unseen world within the last year or so. In the year 1842 he, in union with his accomplished and well-known wife, composed a beautifully-illustrated work, published in three volumes, called *Picturesque Ireland*, which now finds an honoured place in many of our libraries. In the second volume of that work Mr. Hall mentions the following curious fact bearing on our argument. He states that he was then (in 1842) staying at the house of a gentleman, Sir T. Macnaghten, whose father had commanded at the siege of Derry in 1689, one hundred and fifty-three years before. Yet vast as the distance of time was, the explanation which he offered was easy enough. The Macnaghten Clan was summoned to assist in the celebrated siege of Derry. They refused to march unless headed by their chief, who was then a boy of seven. The child was placed on a horse and duly headed his clan, who would follow him alone. That child married when a very old man, and his

eldest son attained to an equally patriarchal age, carrying with him the traditions of Jacobite times down to the reign of Queen Victoria. I could give many other similar instances, illustrating my contention that vivid and accurate traditions of the past can be transmitted over vast spaces of time, and that through persons who come into living contact with one another.[1]

Tertullian must have had ample means, then, of ascertaining the facts concerning the books of the New Testament from living witnesses. There is again another point we must bear in mind, and it is this: the distance of time with which Tertullian's investigations had to deal was not so vast as we sometimes imagine. It was by no means so great as the spaces we have just now referred to. We naturally think of

[1] The Irish people are very Oriental in the tenacity with which they retain ancient traditions, transmitting them intact to posterity. Abundant instances have proved this, the traditions having been perpetuated in some cases for five hundred years or more. The following case has come under the writer's notice in his own neighbourhood. There is near Dublin a village called Finglas, celebrated for its ancient Abbey. A cross stood there which had been venerated from the earliest times. When Cromwell's soldiers were advancing to attack Dublin about the year 1648, their iconoclastic fame reached the inhabitants of Finglas, who took the ancient cross and buried it in one of the glebe fields. Some one hundred and sixty years later a vicar of Finglas of antiquarian tastes heard traditions of this event. He learned from an extremely old man that his grandfather when a boy had been present at the burial of the cross, and had shown him the spot where it was concealed. The vicar made excavations, and duly found the cross, which he re-erected some time about 1810, in a spot where it is still to be seen. This instance will show how two long lives could cover the space between St. Paul's middle age and Tertullian's mature years. See *Fingal and its Churches*, by Rev. R. Walsh, D.D., pp. 147-49. Dublin, 1888. St. Jerome, *De Vir. Illust.*, 53, mentions a similar case in his time. St. Jerome knew an old man who when young had himself known one of St. Cyprian's secretaries. St. Jerome wrote about A.D. 400, St. Cyprian died in 257; the difference exactly between Tertullian and St Paul.

Tertullian as living about the year 200, and then, remembering that our Saviour was born just two centuries before, we ask, What is the value of a man's testimony concerning events two centuries old? But we must bear in mind the exact point at issue. We are not enquiring at all about events two centuries old, but we are enquiring as to Tertullian's evidence with respect to the canonical Gospels and the Acts; and none of these was one hundred years old when Tertullian was born, about 150 A.D., while the Gospel of St. John may not have been more than sixty years old, or thereabouts, at the same date. Now if we take up the writings of Tertullian, which are very copious indeed, we shall find that the Acts of the Apostles are quoted at least one hundred times in them, long passages being in some cases transcribed, and the whole book treated by him as Scripture and true history. If we accept the ordinary view, that the Acts were written previously to St. Paul's death, the book was only a century old at Tertullian's birth. But we can come nearer to the apostolic times.

The Muratorian Fragment is a document which came to light by chance one hundred and fifty years ago. It illustrates the age of the Acts, and shows what wondrous testimonies to the New Testament scriptures we may yet gain. Its story is a very curious and interesting one for ourselves. St. Columbanus was an Irish missionary who, about the year 600 A.D., established a monastery at Bobbio, a retired spot in North Italy. He gathered a library there, and imparted a literary impulse to his followers which never left them.[1] Some Irish monk a hundred years later than Columbanus

[1] See two articles on St. Columbanus and his library in the *Expositor* for June and August 1889.

employed his time in copying into a book an ancient manuscript of the second century giving a list of the books of the New Testament then received at Rome. This second-century manuscript enumerated among these the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and thirteen Epistles of St. Paul. Concerning the Acts of the Apostles, the Roman writer of this document, who lived about A.D. 170, says: "The Acts of all the Apostles are written in one book. Luke explains to the most excellent Theophilus everything which happened in his presence, as the omission of Peter's martyrdom and of Paul's journey into Spain manifestly proves;" a passage which clearly shows that about the middle of the second century the Acts of the Apostles was well known at Rome, and its authorship ascribed to St. Luke.[1] But this is not all. We have another most interesting second-century document, which proves that at the very same period our canonical book was known and authoritatively quoted far away in the south of France. It is hard to exaggerate the evidential value of the Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne written about the year 177, and addressed to their brethren in Asia Minor. That letter quotes the books of the New Testament in the amplest manner, and without any formal references, just as a modern preacher or writer would quote them, showing how common and authoritative was their use. Leader-writers in the *Times* or the *Saturday Review* often garnish their articles with a scriptural quotation; the late Mr. John Bright, in his great popular orations, loved to point them with an apt citation from Holy Writ; but he never thought it necessary, nor do journalists ever think it necessary,

[1] Dr. Salmon, in his *Introd. N.T.*, pp. 48-54, describes the Muratorian Fragment.

to prefix a formal statement of the place whence their texts have been derived. They presume a wide knowledge and a formal recognition of the text of the Bible. So it was in this epistle written from Lyons and Vienne, and in it we find an exact quotation from the Acts of the Apostles—"According as Stephen the perfect martyr prayed, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

But this is not the whole of the argument which can be derived from the Epistle of the Lyonnese Christians, which is given to us at full length in the fifth book of the *Church History* of the celebrated historian Eusebius. Their incidental notice of the Acts involves a vast deal when duly considered. The Epistle from Lyons implies that the Acts were received as authoritative and genuine in the churches of towns like Ephesus, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Miletus, where the memories and traditions of the Apostles were still vivid and living. Then, too, the Bishop of Lyons had suffered in this persecution. His name was Pothinus. He was the first Bishop of the Church of Lyons, and he died when he was more than ninety years of age, and may have been a disciple of an apostle, or of one of the first generation of Christians. At any rate, his memory would easily carry him back to the days of Domitian and the times of the first century; and yet the Church over which this first-century Christian presided accepted the Acts of the Apostles. The testimony of Pothinus helps then to carry back the Acts of the Apostles to the year 100 at least. But we can go farther still, and closer to apostolic times.

The Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are, we may say, universally admitted to be by the same writer. The reference of the Acts to the Gospel,

the unity of style and tone of thought, all demonstrate them to be the production of one mind. Any circumstance therefore which proves the early existence of the Gospel equally proves the existence of the Acts of the Apostles. Now we have proof positive that the Gospel of St. Luke occupied an authoritative position and was counted an apostolic and sacred writing at Rome in the early years of the second century, say between 100 and 150, because when Marcion, whom we might call a primitive Antinomian, wished to compile a gospel suited to his own purposes, he took St. Luke's Gospel, cut out whatever displeased him, and published the remainder as the true version. The perversion and mutilation of St. Luke's work shows that it must already have held a high position in the Church at Rome, or else there would have been no object in mutilating it. Marcion's treatment of St. Luke proves the use and position the Gospel and the Acts must have occupied in days when the converts and companions of the Apostles were still alive.[1] That is as far as we can go back by external testimony. But then we must remember what these facts involve —that the Gospel and the Acts occupied authoritative positions in various parts of the world, and specially in Rome, Gaul, Africa, and Asia Minor, in the generation next after the Apostles. Then let us take up the Book of Acts itself, and what does this book, known at Rome and throughout the Christian world at that early period, tell us? It informs us that it was the work of the writer of the Gospel, and that the writer was a companion of the Apostle Paul throughout the portion of his career sketched in the latter

[1] See Dr. Sanday's *The Gospels in the Second Century*, and Dr. Salmon's *Introd. N. T.*, pp. 204-208.

part of the book. The Christian Church has never pinned its faith to the Lukian authorship of either the Gospel or the Acts. The question of the authorship of these books is an open one, like that of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Acts has been attributed to Silas, to Timothy, to Titus; but I may say, without going into any further details on this question, that every attempt to ascribe the Acts to any one else save to the beloved physician has failed, and must fail, because he was the real author, well known to the living tradition of the Church of Rome in the early part of the second century, as that tradition is handed down to us in the language of the Muratorian Fragment.

If we were writing a critical treatise, we should of course have to enter upon the full discussion of many questions which might here be raised. The Acts of the Apostles in its latter chapters plainly claims to be the work of an eye-witness. In its opening words, placed at the head of this dissertation, it claims to be the work of the author of the Gospel. All the facts fall into a simple, natural order if we accept the traditional testimony of the Church that the Acts and the Gospel were both of them written before the martyrdom of St. Paul, and were indited by the hands of St. Paul's companion St. Luke. Any other solution is forced, unnatural, and involves inconsistencies on every side. We may turn aside from this brief outline of the critical question, to some more purely spiritual reflections, simply referring those who desire more information on the questions of date and authorship to such exhaustive works as those of Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament;* Dr. Westcott on the *New Testament Canon;* Dr. Charteris on *Canonicity*, or Meyer's *Introduction to the Acts.*

First, then, it may strike the intelligent reader, how comes it that we have not much fuller testimony in early Christian writers to the Acts of the Apostles, and to all the books of the Old Testament? How is it that the writings of Polycarp, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, do not abound with references, not merely to the Acts, but also to the four Gospels and to the other works of the New Testament? How is it that we have to depend on this obscure reference and that dubious quotation? These are questions which have often puzzled my own mind before I had investigated, and must often have raised anxiety and thought in other minds sincerely desirous of being rooted and grounded in the truth. But now, after having investigated and thought, I think I can see solid reasons why things are as they are; clear evidences of the truth of the Christian story in the apparent difficulties. Historic imagination is one of the necessary requisites in such an investigation, and historic imagination is one of the qualities in which our German cousins, from whom most of the objections to the canon of the New Testament have been derived, are conspicuously deficient. They are gifted with prodigious industry, and an amazing capacity for patient investigation. They live secluded lives, however, and no one is a worse judge of practical life, or forms wilder conclusions as to what men actually do in practical life, than the academic pure and simple. A dear friend, now with God, himself a distinguished resident of a well-known college, used often to say to me, "Never trust the opinion of a mere college fellow or professor upon any practical point; they know nothing about life." This dictum, begotten of long experience, bears on our argument. German thought and English thought offer sharp and

strong contrasts on many points, and on none more than in this direction. English students mix more in the world, are surrounded by the atmosphere of free institutions, and realize more vividly how men spontaneously act under the conditions of actual existence. The German thinker evolves his men of the past and the facts of their existence out of his own consciousness, without submitting them to the necessary corrections which experience dictates to his English brother; and the result is, that while we may be very ready to accept the premises of the Germans, we should be in general somewhat suspicious of their conclusions. Scholarship alone does not entitle a man to pronounce on questions of history. It is only one of the elements requisite for the solution of such problems. Knowledge of men, experience of life, enabling a man to form a just and true mental picture of the past and of the motives by which men are influenced,—these are elements equally necessary. Now let us try and throw ourselves back by an effort of historical imagination into the age of Polycarp, Ignatius, and Clement of Rome, and I think we shall at once see that the omission of such abundant references to the New Testament as men at times desiderate was quite natural in their case.

Let us reflect a little. The manner in which the early Christians learned the facts and truths of Christianity was quite different from that which now prevails. If men wish now to learn about original Christianity they resort to the New Testament. In the age of Polycarp they resorted to the living voice of the elders who had known the Apostles, and had heard the truth from their lips. Thus Irenæus, who had the four Gospels before him, tells us: "I can recall

the very place where Polycarp used to sit and teach, his manner of speech, his mode of life, his appearance, the style of his address to the people, his frequent references to St. John and to others who had seen our Lord; how he used to repeat from memory the discourses which he had heard from them concerning our Lord, His miracles, and His mode of teaching; and how, being instructed himself by those who were eye-witnesses of the Life of the Word, there was in all that he said a strict agreement with the Scriptures." And it is very natural that men, though possessed of the Gospels, should thus have delighted in the testimony of elders like Polycarp. There is a charm in the human voice, there is a force and power in living testimony, far superior to any written words. Take, for instance, the account of a battle contributed to a newspaper by the best-informed correspondent. Yet how men will hang on the lips and follow with breathless attention the narrative of the humblest actor in the actual contest. This one fact, known to common experience, shows how different the circumstances of the early Christians were as touching the canonical books from those which now exist, or existed in the third and fourth centuries. Again, we must remember that in the age of Polycarp there was no canon of the New Testament as we have it.[1] There were a number

[1] The latest enquiries and discoveries confirm this view, which may be deduced from a study of the apostolic Fathers, with which should be compared the new second-century documents belonging to Ephesus and Rome discussed in *Texte u. Untersuch.* of Gebhardt and Harnack for 1888. Their titles are the tract *De Aleatoribus*, by Pope Victor I., and the *Martyrdoms* of Carpus and Papylus, Companions of St. Polycarp. Pope Victor gives a long extract from the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and calls it "Divine Scripture;" which shows that the canon was not closed at Rome in the last fifteen years of the second century.

of books here and there known to have been written by the Apostles and their immediate followers. One Church could show the Epistle written by St. Paul to the Ephesians, another that written to the Colossians. Clement of Rome, when writing to the Corinthians, expressly refers them to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which possibly was treasured by them as their one sacred document of the new covenant; and so it was doubtless all over the Christian world till well-nigh the close of the second century. The New Testament was dispersed in portions, a few leading Churches possessing perhaps all or most of the books, and a few remote ones probably only a few detached epistles, or a solitary gospel. A Greek document found in the National Library at Paris within the last few years illustrates this point. The Scillitan martyrs were a body of Africans who sealed their testimony to the faith by suffering martyrdom in the year 180, about three years after the sufferings of the Christians of Lyons and Vienne. North Africa, now the chosen home of the false prophet, was then the most fruitful field for the religion of the Crucified, yielding doctors, saints, confessors, in multitudes. The document which has now come to light tells the story of these north Africans and their testimony to the truth. The details of their judicial examination are there set forth, and in one question, proposed by the heathen magistrate, we have an interesting glimpse of the very point upon which we are insisting, the scattered and detached nature of the New Testament writings at that period. The President of the Roman Court, in the course of his examination, asks the leader of the martyrs, St. Speratus, "What are those books in your cases?" "They are," he replied, "the epistles

of that holy man Paul." So that apparently the Scillitan Church depended for instruction, in the closing years of the second century, upon the Epistles of St. Paul alone.[1]

The canon of the New Testament grew up by degrees somehow thus. While the Apostles and their followers and the friends of their followers lived and flourished, men naturally sought after their living testimonies, consulting doubtless such documents as well which lay within their reach. But when the living witnesses and their friends had passed away, the natural instinct of the Church, guided by that Spirit of Truth which in the darkest times has never wholly left Christ's Spouse, led her to treasure up and dwell with greater love upon those written documents which she had possessed from the beginning. It is no wonder, then, that we do not find large quotations and copious references to the canonical books in the earliest writers—simply because it was impossible they should then have occupied the same place in the Christian consciousness as they now do. Rather, on the contrary, we should be inclined to say that, had they been largely quoted and frequently referred to by Polycarp, Ignatius, or Clement, men might naturally have derived therefrom a forcible argument against the genuine character of the works of these primitive Fathers, as such quotations would have been contrary to the principles of human nature. It is very important for us to remember these facts. They have a very clear bearing upon present-day controversies. Friends and foes of Christianity have often

[1] An interesting account of this second-century document will be found in the *Texts*, edited by Gebhardt and Harnack, or in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.* under "Scillitan Martyrs." Every scrap of second century evidence is of the greatest importance for biblical criticism.

thought that the truth of our religion was bound up with the traditional view of the canon of the New Testament, or with some special theory of inspiration; forgetting the self-evident truth that Christianity existed at the beginning without a canon of the New Testament, that the early Christians depended upon personal testimony alone, and that if the Apostles and their friends had never written a line or left a solitary document behind them, yet that we should have abundant information concerning the work and teaching of our Lord and His Apostles in the writings of the successors of the Apostles, compared with and fortified by contemporaneous pagan testimony. Men have sometimes thought and spoken as if the New Testament descended from heaven in its present shape, like the image that fell down from Jupiter which the Ephesians worshipped, forgetting the true history of its upgrowth and origin. The critical theories that have been advanced in abundance of late years would have troubled a second-century Christian very little. If the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel were denied, or the Pauline authorship of Colossians or Ephesians questioned; what does it matter? would have been his reply. These documents may have been forgeries, but there are plenty of other documents which tell the same story, and I have myself known many men who have suffered and died because they had embraced the truths, from the lips of the Apostles themselves, which they have taught me. The simple fact is, that if all the books of the New Testament were proved impudent forgeries except the Epistle to the Romans, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Galatians, which every person admits, we should have ample and convincing statements of Christian truth and doctrine.

The devout Christian may, then, make his mind easy, certain that no efforts and no advances in the field of biblical criticism are likely to ruffle even a feather of the faith once delivered to the saints.

But then, some one may come forward and say, is not this a very uncomfortable position for us? Would it not have been much more easy and consoling for Christians to have had the whole canon of Scripture infallibly decided by Divine authority once for all, so as to save all doubts and disputations on the whole subject? Would it not have been better had the Acts of the Apostles expressly named St. Luke as its author, and appended ample proofs that its statement was true? This objection is a very natural one, and springs up at times in every mind; and yet it is merely part and parcel of the larger objection, Why has Revelation been left a matter of doubt and disputation in any respect? Nay, it is part of a still wider and vaster question, Why has truth in any department, scientific, philosophical, ethical, or historical, been left a matter of debate? Why has it not shone forth by its own inherent light and compelled the universal consent of admiring mankind? Why has not the great fundamental truth of all, the existence and nature of God, been made so clear that an atheist could not possibly exist? A century and a-half ago Bishop Butler, in his immortal *Analogy*, disposed of this objection, which still crops up afresh in every generation as if that work had never been written.[1] God has placed us here in a state of probation, and neither in temporal nor in spiritual matters is the evidence for what is true, and right, and wise so clear and overwhelming that no room is

[1] See Butler's *Analogy*, Part II., chap. vi.

left for mistake or error. As it is in every other department of life, so is it especially with reference to the canon of Scripture. It would doubtless be very convenient for us if the whole question were settled authoritatively and no doubts possible, but would it be good for us? would it be wholesome for our spiritual life? I trow not. We have, indeed, a living and speaking example of the blessings of uncertainty in the state of the Roman Catholic Church, which has tried to better the Divine method of training mankind, and banish all uncertainty. That communion undertakes to settle infallibly all questions of theology, and to leave nothing in doubt; and with what result? The vast body of the laity take no interest whatsoever in theological questions. They regard theology as outside their sphere, and belonging to the clergy exclusively. The clergy in turn believe that the Pope, in his office of infallible and universal pastor and teacher, has alone the right and authority to settle doctrines, and they leave it to him. They have made a solitude, and that they call peace, and the pretence alone of an authority which undertakes to release man from doubt and the need of investigation has paralysed theological inquiry among Roman Catholics.

The same results on a vastly larger scale must have happened throughout the Christian world had God made His revelation so clear that no doubt could arise concerning it. Man is a lazy animal by nature, and that laziness would at once have been developed by the very abundance of the light vouchsafed. Religion would have been laid aside as a thing settled once for all. All interest would have been lost in it, and human attention would have been concentrated on those purely mundane matters where uncertainty arises, and therefore im-

periously demands the mind's thought and care. The blessings of uncertainty would offer a very wide topic for meditation. The man of vast wealth whose bread is certain can never know the childlike faith whereby the poor man waits upon his God and receives from Him day by day his daily dole. The uncertainties of life hide from us much future sorrow, teach us to walk by faith, not by sight, and lead us to depend completely on the loving guidance of that Fatherly Hand which does all things well. The uncertainties of life develop the spiritual life of the soul. The doubts and questions which arise about religion bring their own blessings with them too. They develop the intellectual life of the spirit. They prevent religion becoming a matter of superstition, they offer opportunities for the exercise of the graces of honesty, courage, humility, and love; and thus form an important element in that Divine training by which man is fitted here below for the beatific vision which awaits him hereafter. Human nature ever craves with longing desire to walk by sight. The Divine method evermore prescribes, on the contrary, that man must for the present walk by faith. Very wisely indeed, and with truest spiritual instinct, the poet of the *Christian Year* has sung, in words applicable to life and to theology alike:—

"There are who, darkling and alone,
Would wish the weary night were gone,
Though dawning morn should only snow
The secret of their unknown woe:
Who pray for sharpest throbs of pain
To ease them of doubt's galling chain:
'Only disperse the cloud,' they cry,
'And if our fate be death, give light and let us die.'

"Unwise I deem them, Lord, unmeet
To profit by Thy chastenings sweet,

For Thou wouldst have us linger still
Upon the verge of good or ill,
That on Thy guiding hand unseen
Our undivided hearts may lean,
And this our frail and foundering bark
Glide in the narrow wake of Thy beloved ark."[1]

The thoughts with which we have hitherto dealt connect themselves with the opening words of the text with which we have begun this chapter, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus." There are two other points in this passage which are worthy of devout attention. The writer of the Acts took a thoroughly historical view of our Lord's life after the resurrection as well as before that event. He considered that our Lord's person, no matter how it may have been modified by His death and resurrection, was still as real after these events as in the days when He ministered and wrought miracles in Galilee and Jerusalem. His whole life was continuous, from the day of the birth in Bethlehem "until the day He was taken up."

Then again St. Luke recognises the dual personality of our Lord. As we shall afterwards have frequently to notice, St. Luke realized His Divine character. In the opening verses of this book he recognises His complete and perfect humanity—"After that He had given commandment through the Holy Ghost unto the Apostles." There was an ancient heresy about the nature of our Lord's person, which denied the perfection of our Lord's humanity, teaching that His Divinity took the place of the human spirit in Christ. Such teaching deprives us of much comfort and instruction which the Christian can draw from a meditation upon the true doctrine as taught here by St. Luke. Jesus

[1] J. Keble, "The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany."

Christ was God as well as man, but it was through the manhood He revealed the life and nature of God. He was perfect Man in all respects, with body, soul, and spirit complete; and in the actions of His manhood, in the exercise of all its various activities, He required the assistance and support of the Holy Ghost just as really as we ourselves do. He taught, gave commandments, worked miracles through the Holy Ghost. The humanity of the Eternal Son required the assistance of the Divine Spirit. Christ sought that Divine aid in prolonged communion with His Father and His God, and then went forth to work His miracles and give His commandments. Prayer and the gift of the Spirit and the works and marvels of Christ were closely connected together, even before the open descent of the Spirit and the wonders of Pentecost. There was a covenant blessing and a covenant outpouring of the Spirit peculiar to Christianity which was not vouchsafed till Christ had ascended. But the Divine Spirit had been given in a measure long before Christ came. It was through the Spirit that every blessing and every gift came to patriarchs, prophets, warriors, teachers, and workers of every kind under the Jewish dispensation. The Spirit of God came upon Bezaleel and Aholiab, qualifying them to work cunningly for the honour and glory of Jehovah when a tabernacle was to be reared. The Spirit of God came upon Samson, and roused his natural courage when Israel was to be delivered. The Spirit of God could rest even upon a Saul, and convert him for a time into a changed character. And just as really the Holy Ghost rested upon the human nature of Jesus Christ, guiding Him in the utterance of those commandments, the outcome and development of which we trace in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONVERSATIONS OF THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

"They therefore, when they were come together, asked Him, saying, Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—ACTS i. 6-9.

THE conversations and intercourse between our Lord and His apostles during the forty days which elapsed from the resurrection to the ascension must have been of intensest interest, yet, like so much that we should esteem interesting concerning the heroes of Scripture and their lives, these things are wrapped round with thickest darkness. We get a glimpse of the risen Christ here and there. We are told He was conversing with His disciples touching the things concerning the kingdom of God. And then we are practically referred to the Acts of the Apostles if we wish to know what topics His resurrection discourses dealt with. And when we do so refer to the Acts we find that His disciples moved along the line of Christian development with steps sure, unfaltering, and decided, because they doubtless felt themselves nerved by the well-remembered directions, the conscious guidance of

the Eternal Son of God, vouchsafed in the commandments given by Him in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Let us reflect for a little on the characteristics of Christ's risen appearances to His disciples. I note then in the first place that they were intermittent, and not continuous,—here and there, to Mary Magdalene at one time; to the disciples journeying to Emmaus, to the assembled twelve, to five hundred brethren at once, at other times. Such were the manifestations of our Lord; and some may feel inclined to cavil at them, and ask, Why did He not dwell continuously and perpetually with His disciples as before His resurrection? And yet, reading our narrative in the light of other scriptures, we might expect the resurrection appearances of Christ to have been of this description. In one place in the Gospel narrative we read that our Lord replied thus to a section of His adversaries: "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." Now we often read of angelic appearances in Holy Scripture, in the Old and New Testament alike. We read too of appearances of Old Testament saints, as of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration. And they are all like those of our Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection. They are sudden, independent of time or space or material barriers, and yet are visible and tangible though glorified. Such in Genesis was Abraham's vision of angels at the tent door, when they did eat and drink with him. Such was Lot's vision of angels who came and lodged with him in wicked Sodom. Such was Peter's vision when an angel released him, guided him through the intricate mazes of Jerusalem's streets; and such were Christ's appearances when, as on this occasion, His

disciples, now accustomed to His risen and glorified form, tested Him as of old with the question, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

I. *Now let us here notice the naturalness of this query concerning the restoration of the kingdom.* The Apostles evidently shared the national aspirations of the Jews at that time. A large number of books have come to light of late years, which show what a keen expectation of the Messiah's kingdom and His triumph over the Romans existed at the time, and prior to the time, of our Saviour. The book of Enoch, discovered one hundred years ago in Abyssinia, and translated into English in the beginning of the present century, was written a century at least before the Incarnation.[1] The book of Jubilees was written in Palestine about the time of our Lord's birth; the Psalter of Solomon dates from the same period. All these works give us clearest glimpses into the inner mind, the religious tone, of the Jewish nation at that time.[2] The pious unsophisticated people of Galilee were daily expecting the establishment of the Messianic kingdom; but the kingdom they expected was no spiritual institution, it was simply an earthly scene of material glory, where

[1] The book of Enoch was translated into English by Archbishop Laurence, and was first published about seventy years ago. There is an exhaustive article on the subject in the second volume of the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, written by Professor Lipsius of Jena.

[2] The book of Jubilees has never been published in English. An interesting account of it will be found in the later editions of Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopædia*. The reader will find another account of the book of Jubilees in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, iv., 507. The Psalms of Solomon are contained in the *Cod. Pseud. Vet. Test.* of J. A. Fabricius. There is a brief notice of them in the *Dict. Chris. Biog.*, iv., 508, under the title "Pseudepigrapha."

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the Jews would once again be exalted above all surrounding nations, and the hated invader expelled from the fair plains of Israel. We can scarcely realize or understand the force and naturalness of this question, "Dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" as put by these Galilean peasants till one takes up Archbishop Laurence's translation of the book of Enoch, and sees how this eager expectation dominated every other feeling in the Jewish mind of that period, and was burned into the very secrets of their existence by the tyranny of Roman rule. Thus, let us take the forty-seventh chapter of the book of Enoch, which may very possibly have been in the thoughts of the Apostles as they presented this query to their Lord. In that chapter we read the following words, attributed unto Enoch: "There I beheld the Ancient of Days, whose head was like white wool; and with Him another, whose countenance resembled that of man. His countenance was full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels. Then I inquired of one of the angels who went with me, and who showed me every secret thing concerning this Son of Man, who He was, whence He was, and why He accompanied the Ancient of Days. He answered and said to me, This is the Son of Man, to whom righteousness belongs, with whom righteousness has dwelt, and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed. For the Lord of Spirits has chosen Him, and His portion has surpassed all before the Lord of Spirits in everlasting uprightness. This Son of Man whom thou beholdest shall raise up kings and the mighty from their couches, and the powerful from their thrones; shall loosen the bridles of the powerful, and break in pieces the teeth of sinners. He shall hurl kings from

their thrones and their dominions, because they will not exalt and praise Him, nor humble themselves before Him, by whom their kingdoms were granted to them. The countenance likewise of the mighty shall He cast down, filling them with confusion. Darkness shall be their habitation, and worms shall be their bed; nor from that their bed shall they hope to be again raised, because they exalted not the Name of the Lord of Spirits." This is one specimen of the Messianic expectations, which were just then worked up to fever pitch among the Galileans especially, and were ever leading them to burst out into bloody rebellion against the power of the Romans. We might multiply such quotations fourfold did our space permit. This one extract must suffice to show the tone and quality of the religious literature upon which the souls of the Apostles had fed and been sustained, when they proposed this query, "Dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They were thinking simply of such a kingdom as the book of Enoch foretold.

This very point seems to us one of the special and most striking evidences for the inspiration and supernatural direction of the writers of the New Testament. Their natural, purely human, and national conception of the kingdom of God was one thing; their final, their divinely taught and inspired conception of that kingdom is quite another thing. I cannot see how, upon any ground of mere human experience or human development, the Apostles could have risen from the gross, material conceptions of the book of Enoch, wherein the kingdom of the Messiah would have simply been a purified, reformed, and exalted copy of the Roman Empire of that day, to the spiritual and truly catholic idea of a kingdom not of this world, which

ruled over spirits rather than over bodies.[1] Some persons maintain that Christianity in its doctrines, organisation, and discipline was but the outcome of natural forces working in the world at that epoch. But take this doctrine alone, "My kingdom is not of this world," announced by Christ before Pilate, and impressed upon the Apostles by revelation after revelation, and experience after experience, which they only very gradually assimilated and understood. Where did it come from? How was it the outcome of natural forces? The whole tendency of Jewish thought was in the opposite direction. Nationalism of the most narrow, particular, and limited kind was the predominant idea, specially among those Galilean provincials who furnished the vast majority of the earliest disciples of Jesus Christ. Our minds have been so steeped in the principles of Christian liberalism, we have been so thoroughly taught the rejection of race-prejudice, that we can scarcely realize the narrow and limited ideas which must have ruled the minds of the first Christians, and therefore we miss the full force of this argument for the Divine character of the Christian religion. A Roman Catholic peasant from Connaught, an Ulster

[1] The strongest argument, from a mere literary point of view, for the existence of a supernatural element in Christianity and primitive Christian literature will be derived from a contrast between the Jewish literature of the period of the Christian era and the New Testament. Take, for instance, the book of Jubilees. It was written about the time of our Lord, and probably in Galilee. It represents the current tone of Jewish religion, and shows us, with its narrowness and absurdities, what the New Testament would have been had it been the product of unassisted human nature. The book of Jubilees or of Enoch is the strongest argument for the inspiration of the New Testament. I cannot even imagine what explanation can be offered of the difference in tone between the Christian and the Jewish writings save that of the inspiration of the Christian.

Orangeman, a Celtic Presbyterian Highlander, none of these will take a wide, tolerant, generous view of religion. They view the question through their own narrow provincial spectacles. And yet any one of them would have been broad, liberal, and comprehensive when contrasted with the tone and thought of the Galilean provincials of our Lord's day. They lived lonely, solitary lives, away from the din, the pressure, and the business of daily life; they knew nothing of what the great outside world was thinking and doing; they fed their spirits on the glories of the past, and had no room in their gloomy fanaticism for aught that was liberal and truly spiritual. How could men like them have developed the idea of the Catholic Church, boundless as the earth itself, limited by no hereditary or fleshly bonds, and trammelled by no circumstances of race, climate, or kindred? The magnificence of the idea, the grandeur of the conception, is the truest and most sufficient evidence of the divinity of its origin. "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female," the rapt expression of an inspired and illuminated Apostle, when compared with this query, "Dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" the darkened utterance of carnal and uninspired minds groping after truth, furnishes to the thinking soul the clearest evidence of the presence of a supernatural power, of a Divine enlightenment, vouchsafed to the Apostles upon the Day of Pentecost. If this higher knowledge, this nobler conception, this spiritualised ideal, came not from God, whence did it come?

I do not think we can press this point of the catholicity and universality of the Christian idea and the Christian society too far. We cannot possibly make

too much of it. There were undoubtedly Christian elements, or elements whence Christian ideas were developed, prevalent in the current Judaism of the day. Many a clause of the Lord's Prayer and of the Sermon on the Mount can be paralleled almost word for word from the Jewish teachers and writings of the times immediately preceding our Lord. There was nothing in Christ of that petty vanity of little minds which craves after complete originality, and which will be nothing if not completely new. He was indeed the wise and the good householder, who brought forth out of His treasures things old as well as things new. Many a teacher and thinker, like Philo, whose ideas had been broadened by the Divine training of banishment and enforced exile in Alexandria or in Asia Minor, had risen to nobler and wider views than were current in Palestine. But it was not among these, or such as these, that the catholic ideas of the gospel took their rise. Christianity took its rise among men whose ideas, whose national aspirations, whose religious hopes, were of the narrowest and most limited kind; and yet, amid such surroundings and planted in such a soil, Christianity assumed at once a world-wide mission, rejected at once and peremptorily all mere Judaic exclusiveness, and claimed for itself the widest scope and development. The universality of the Gospel message, the comprehensive, all-embracing character of the Gospel teaching, as set forth in our Lord's parting words, is, we conclude, an ample evidence of its Divine and superhuman origin.

II. *In this passage again there lies hidden the wisest practical teaching for the Church of all ages.* We have warnings against the folly which seeks to unravel the future and penetrate that veil of darkness by which our God in mercy shrouds the unknown. We have

taught us the benefits which attend the uncertainties of our Lord's return and of the end of this present dispensation. "It is not for you to know times or seasons." Let us endeavour to work out this point, together with the manifold illustrations of it which the history of the Church affords.

(*a*) The wisdom of the Divine answer will best be seen if we take the matter thus, and suppose our Lord to have responded to the apostolic appeal fixing some definite date for the winding-up of man's probation state, and for that manifestation of the sons of God which will take place at His appearing and His kingdom. Our Lord, in fixing upon some such definite date, must have chosen one that was either near at hand or else one that was removed far off into the distant future. In either of these cases He must have defeated the great object of the Divine society which He was founding. That object was simply this, to teach men how to lead the life of God amid the children of men. The Christian religion has indeed sometimes been taunted with being an unpractical religion, turning men's eyes and attention from the pressing business and interests of daily life to a far-away spiritual state with which man has nothing to do, at least for the present. But is this the case? Has Christianity proved itself unpractical? If so, what has placed Christendom at the head of civilization? The tendencies of great principles are best shown in the actions of vast masses. Individuals may be better or worse than their creeds, but if we wish to see the average result of doctrines we must take their adherents in the mass and enquire as to their effect on them. Here, then, is where we may triumph. The religions of Greece and of Rome are identical in principle

and even in their deities, with the paganism of India, as the investigations of comparative historians have abundantly shown.[1] Compare Christendom and India from the simply practical point of view, and which can show the better record? The paganism of India, Persia, and Western Asia was the parent of the paganism of Greece and Rome. The child has passed away and given place to a noble and spiritual religion, while the parent still remains. And now what is the result? Can the boldest deny that while barbarism, decay, and death reign over the realms of Asiatic paganism, though starting with every advantage upon its side, concerning the religion of the Cross, which is taunted with being an unpractical religion, and concerning that religion alone, can it be said in the language of the rapt Jewish seer, "Wheresoever the waters of that river have come, behold there is life," and that the fair plains, and crowded cities, and the massive material development and civilisation of Europe and of America alike proclaim the truth, that Christianity has the promise of the life which now is as well as of that which is to come?

(*b*) Our Lord's answer to His Apostles was couched in words suited to develop this practical aspect of

[1] The most curious instance of the essential identity of the nature deities of the West and East will be found in Mithraism. The worship of Mithras was originally the worship of the sun. It started from India, passed into Persia, thence found its way to Asia Minor, and about 70 B.C. was introduced into Rome, where it became, about A.D. 200, the great rival of Christianity, imitating the sacraments of baptism and holy communion in rites of its own. Mithraism easily combined with the worship of Apollo, or the Sun-God. Apollo, Mithras, and Baal were fundamentally one and the same. Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Origen call Mithraism a demoniacal imitation of Christianity. See more on this point in the article on Mithras in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iii., p. 925.

His religion. It refused to minister to mere human curiosity, and left men uncertain as to the time of His return, that they might be fruitful workers in the great field of life. And now behold what ill results would have followed had He acted otherwise! The Master in fact says, It is not well for you to know the times or seasons, because such knowledge would strike at the root of practical Christianity. Uncertainty as to the time of the end is the most healthful state for the followers of Christ. Christ holds out the prospect of His own return for a twofold purpose: first, to comfort His people under the daily troubles of life—"Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand;" "Whatever our hope or joy or crown of glorying, are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming;" "If we believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him,"—these and dozens of other passages, which will recur in a moment to every student of St. Paul's writings, prove the power to comfort and sustain exercised by the doctrine of Christ's second coming. But there was another and still more powerful influence exercised by this doctrine. It stirred men up to perpetual watchfulness and untiring care. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour;" "Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh;" "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light,"—these and many a similar exhortation of the Master and of his chosen Apostles alike, indicate to us that another great object of this doctrine was to keep Christians perpetually alive with an intense

anxiety and a sleepless watchfulness directed towards the person and appearing of Christ. The construction of the gospel narrative shows this.

(*c*) There are in the New Testament, taken as a whole, two contrasted lines of prophecy concerning the Second Coming of Christ. If in one place the Lord Jesus speaks as if the date of His coming were fixed for His own generation and age, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled," in the very same context He indicates that it is only *after a long time* that the Lord of the servants will return, to take account of their dealings with the property entrusted to them. If St. Paul in one place seems to indicate to the Thessalonians the speedy appearing of Christ and the end of the dispensation, in another epistle he corrects such a misapprehension of his meaning. If the Revelation of St. John in one place represents the awful Figure who moves amid the Churches, watching their works and spying out their secret sins, as saying, "Behold, I come quickly," the same book pictures a long panorama of events, extending over vast spaces of time, destined yet to elapse before the revelation of the city of God and the final triumph of the saints. The doctrine of Christ's second appearing is like many another doctrine in the New Testament. Like the doctrine of God's election, which is undoubtedly there, and yet side by side with election appears as really and truly the doctrine of man's free will; like the doctrine of God's eternal and almighty love, side by side with which appears the existence of a personal devil, and of an abounding iniquity and sorrow which seems to contradict this doctrine; like the doctrine of the Godhead itself, where the Unity of the Divine Nature is most clearly taught, yet side by side therewith

appears the manifold personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as existing in that Nature;—so too is it in the case of the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming. We have a twofold antinomy. In one line of prophecy we have depicted the nearness and suddenness of Christ's appearing; in another line we behold that tremendous event thrown into the dim and distant future. And what is the result upon the human mind of such opposite views? It is a healthy, useful, practical result. We are taught the certainty of the event, and the uncertainty of the time of that event; so that hope is stirred, comfort ministered, and watchfulness evoked. We can see this more clearly by imagining the opposite. Suppose Christ had responded to the spirit of the apostolic query, "Dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" and fixed the precise date of His coming? He would in that case have altogether defeated the great end of His own work and labour. Suppose He had fixed it a thousand years from the time of His Ascension. Then indeed the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming would have lost all personal and practical power over the lives of the generation of Christians then living, or who should live during the hundreds of years which were to elapse till the date appointed. The day of their death, the uncertainty of life, these would be the inspiring motives to activity and devotion felt by the early Christians; while, as a matter of fact, St. Paul never appeals to either of them, but ever appeals to the coming of Christ and His appearing to judgment as the motives to Christian zeal and diligence. But a more serious danger in any such prediction lurks behind. What would have been the result of any such precise prophecy upon the minds of the Christians who lived close to the time of its

fulfilment? It would have at once defeated the great end of the Christian religion, as we have already defined it. The near approach of the great final catastrophe would have completely paralysed all exertion, and turned the members of Christ's Church into idle, useless, unpractical religionists. We all know how the near approach of any great event, how the presence of any great excitement, hinders life's daily work. A great joy or a great sorrow, either of them is utterly inconsistent with tranquil thought, with steady labour, with persistent and profitable exertions. The expectation of some tremendous change, whether it be for happiness or misery, creates such a flutter in the spirit that steady application is simply out of the question. So would it have been in our supposed case. As the time fixed for the appearance of our Lord drew nigh, all work, business, labour, the manifold engagements of life, the rearing of families, the culture of the ground, the development of trade and commerce, would be considered a grand impertinence, and man's powers and man's life would be prostrated in view of the approaching catastrophe.

(*d*) Again and again has history verified and amply justified the wisdom of the Master's reply, "It is not for you to know times or seasons." It was justified in apostolic experience. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is a commentary on our Lord's teaching in this passage. The Christians of Thessalonica imbibed the notion from St. Paul's words that Christ's appearance to judgment was at hand. Perhaps St. Paul's words in his first Epistle led them into the mistake. The Apostle was not infallible on all questions. He was richly inspired, but he knew nothing of the future save what was expressly revealed, and beyond

such express revelations he could only surmise and guess like other men.[1] The Thessalonians, however, were led by him to expect the immediate appearance of Christ, and the result was just what I have depicted. The transcendent event, which they thought impending, paralyzed exertion, destroyed honest and useful labour, scandalized the gospel cause, and compelled St. Paul to use the sternest, sharpest words of censure and rebuke. The language of St. Paul completely justifies our line of argument. He tells us that the spirits of the Thessalonians had been upset, the natural result of a great expectation had been experienced as we might humanly have predicted. The beginning of the second chapter of his Second Epistle proves this: "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is present." See here how he dwells on mental perturbation as the result of high-strung expectation; and that is bad, for mental peace, not mental disturbance, is the portion of Christ's people. Then again he indicates another result of which we have spoken as natural under such circumstances. Idleness and its long train of vices had followed hard upon the mental strain which found place for a time at

[1] The miraculous gifts of the Spirit possessed by the Apostles did not guard them against mistakes as to the future, nor override the exercise of private judgment and common sense, nor enable them to work miracles or cure sicknesses for their own purposes. St. Paul, for instance, was obliged to depend upon the assistance of St. Luke when he was ill. The miraculous powers were restrained, as in our Lord's example, to cases where God's glory was specially advanced by their exercise.

Thessalonica, and so in the third chapter of the Epistle he writes, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly;" and then he defines the disorderliness of which he complains, "For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies." Or, to put the matter in a concise shape, and interpret St. Paul into modern language, the expectation of the near approach of the judgment and the personal appearing of Christ had upset the spirits of the Thessalonians; it had so fluttered them they could not attend to ordinary business. Human nature then asserted itself. Idleness resulted from the mental disturbance. Idleness begot gossip, disorder, and scandals. The idlers indeed professed that they ceased from labour in order to give their whole attention to devotion But St. Paul knew that there was no incompatibility between work and prayer, while he was convinced there was the closest union between idleness and sin. Idleness put on an appearance of great spirituality, but St. Paul effectually met the difficulty. He knew that an idler, no matter how spiritual he pretended to be, must eat, and so he strikes at the root of such mock religion by laying down, "If any will not work, neither let him eat,"—a good healthy practical rule, which soon restored the moral and spiritual tone of the Macedonian Church to its normal condition.

(*e*) The experiences of Thessalonica have been often repeated down through the ages till we come to our own day. I remember a curious instance that I once read of exactly the same spirit, and exactly the same method of cure, as St. Paul used, in the case of an Egyptian monastery in the fifth century. The monks

were then divided into two classes. There were monks who laboured diligently and usefully in communities, and there were others who lived idle lives as solitaries, pretending to a spirituality too great to permit them to engage in secular pursuits. A solitary one day entered a monastery presided over by a wise abbot. He found the monks all diligently employed, and, addressing them from his superior standpoint, said, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." "That is very good, brother," said the abbot. "Take our brother away to his cell," he said to one of his attendants, who left him there to meditate. Nature, after a time, began to assert its sway, and the solitary became hungry. He heard the signal for the midday meal, and wondered that no man came to summon him. Time passed, and the evening meal was announced, and yet no invitation came. At last the solitary left his cell and proceeded in search of food, when the wise abbot impressed on him the Pauline rule that it was quite possible to unite work and worship, labouring for the bread that perisheth while feeding on the bread that is eternal.

The tenth century again verified the wisdom of the Divine denial to reveal the future, or fix a date for Christ's second coming. The year 1000 was regarded in the century immediately preceding it as the limit of the world's existence and the date of Christ's appearing. The belief in this view spread all over Europe, and the result was just the same as at Thessalonica. Men abandoned all work, they left their families to starve, and thought the one great object worth living for was devotion and preparation for their impending change. And the result was widespread misery, famine, disease, and death, while, instead of working any beneficial

change upon society at large, the terror through which men had passed brought about, when the dreaded time had gone by, a reaction towards carelessness and vice, all the greater from the self-denial which they had practised for a time. And as it was in the earlier ages so has it been in later times. The people of London were, in the middle of the last century, deluded into a belief that on a certain day the Lord would appear to judgment, with the result that the business of London was suspended for the time. The lives of John Wesley and his fellow-evangelists tell us how diligently they seized the opportunity of preaching repentance and preparation for the coming of Christ, though they shared not the belief in the prediction which gained them their audience. While again in the present century there was a widespread opinion about the year 1830 that the coming of Christ was at hand. It was the time when the Irvingite and Darbyite bodies sprang into existence, in which systems the near approach of the Second Coming forms an important element. Men then thought that it was a mere matter of days or weeks, and in consequence they acted just like the Thessalonians. In their ardour their minds were upset, their business and families neglected, and, as far as in them lay, the work of life and of civilisation was utterly destroyed. While when again we come to later times experience has taught that no men have been more profitless and unpractical Christians than the numbers, by no means inconsiderable, who have spent their lives in vain attempts to fix now for this year, and again for that day, the exact time when the Son of Man should appear. The wisest Christians have acted otherwise. It is told of a foreign bishop, eminent for his sanctity and for the

wise guidance which he could give in the spiritual life, that he was once engaged in playing a game of bowls. One of the bystanders was of a critical disposition, and was scandalized at the frivolity of the bishop's occupation, so much beneath the dignity, as it was thought, of his character. "If Christ was to appear the next moment, what would you do?" he asked the bishop. "I would make the next stroke the best possible one," was the wise man's reply. And the reply involved the true principle which the Lord Himself by His refusal to gratify the Apostles' curiosity desired to impress on His people. The uncertainty of the time of Christ's coming, combined with the certainty of the event itself, should stir us up to intensity of purpose, to earnestness of life, to a hallowed enthusiasm to do thoroughly every lawful deed, to think thoroughly every lawful thought, conscious that in so doing we are fulfilling the will and work of the great Judge Himself. Blessed indeed shall be those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.

III. Christ, after He had reproved the spirit of vain curiosity which strikes at the root of all practical effort, then indicates the source of their strength and the sphere of its activity. "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you." They were wanting then, as yet, in power, and the Holy Ghost was to supply the want. Intellect, talent, eloquence, wit, all these things are God's gifts, but they are not the source of spiritual power. A man may possess them one and all, and yet be lacking in that spiritual power which came upon the Apostles through the descent of the Spirit. And the sphere of their appointed activity is designated for them. Just as in the earliest days of Christ's public ministry He spake words indicative of

the universal spirit of the gospel, and prophesied of a time when men from the east and west should come and sit down in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom should be cast out, so, too, one of His few recorded resurrection sayings now indicates the same: "Ye shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Jerusalem, Judæa,—the Apostles were to begin their great practical life of witnessing at home, but they were not to stay there. Samaria was next to have its opportunity, and so we shall find it to have been the case; and then, working from home as centre, the uttermost parts of the earth, a distant Spain from Paul, and a distant India from Thomas, and a barbarous Scythia from Andrew, and a frigid, ocean-girt Britain from a Joseph of Arimathæa,[1] were to learn tidings of the new life in Christ.[2]

[1] See my *Ireland and the Celtic Church* for the traditions about St. Joseph of England.

[2] The line of argument followed in this chapter was originally suggested to me by a sermon for the First Sunday in Advent, printed in a volume of *Sermons at the Octagon Chapel, Bath*, by the Rev. W. C. Magee, B.D., now Archbishop of York. London, Hatchards, 1858.

CHAPTER III.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST, AND ITS LESSONS.

"When He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."—ACTS i. 9.

IN this passage we have the bare literal statement of the fact of Christ's ascension. Let us now consider this supernatural fact, the Ascension, and meditate upon its necessity, and even naturalness, when taken in connection with the whole earthly existence of Incarnate God, and then strive to trace the results and blessings to mankind which followed from it in the gift of the new power, the covenanted gift of the Spirit, and in the spread of the universal religion.

I. The ascension of our Lord is a topic whereon familiarity has worked its usual results; it has lost for most minds the sharpness of its outline and the profundity of its teaching because universally accepted by Christians; and yet no doctrine raises deeper questions, or will yield more profitable and far-reaching lessons. First, then, we may note the place this doctrine holds in apostolic teaching. Taking the records of that teaching contained in the Acts and the Epistles, we find that it occupies a real substantial position. The ascension is there referred to, hinted at, taken as granted, pre-supposed, but it is not obtruded nor dwelt

upon overmuch.[1] The resurrection of Christ was the great central point of apostolic testimony; the ascension of Christ was simply a portion of that fundamental doctrine, and a natural deduction from it. If Christ had been raised from the dead and had thus become the firstfruits of the grave, it required but little additional exercise of faith to believe that He had passed into that unseen and immediate presence of Deity where the perfected soul finds its complete satisfaction. In fact, the doctrine of the resurrection apart from the doctrine of the ascension would have been a mutilated fragment, for the natural question would arise, not for one age but for every age, If Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the dead, where is He? Produce your risen Master, and we will believe in Him, would be the triumphant taunt to which Christians would be ever exposed. But then when we closely examine the teaching of the Apostles, we shall find that the doctrine of the ascension was just as really bound up with all their preaching and exhortations as the doctrine of the resurrection; the whole Christian idea as conceived by them just as necessarily involved the doctrine of the ascension as it did that of the resurrection. St. Peter's conception of Christianity, for instance, involved the ascension. Whether in his

[1] The incarnation and the ascension are, in this respect, very much on a level in St. Paul's writings. The incarnation and birth of our Lord are referred to incidentally, but only incidentally, in Rom. i. 3; Gal. iv. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16; yet the facts of the birth and incarnation must have occupied a great share of St. Paul's attention, if we are to judge of his teaching by the Gospel of St. Luke, his disciple and companion. The Apostle never formally states the doctrine of the incarnation as St. Luke set it forth, because it was well known by all to whom he wrote as the very foundation of his system. A bare reference was therefore enough. It was just the same with the doctrine of the ascension.

speech at the election of Matthias, or in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, or in his address in Solomon's Porch after the healing of the crippled beggar, his teaching ever presupposes and involves the ascension. He takes the doctrine and the fact for granted. Jesus is with him the Being "whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things." So is it too with St. John in his Gospel. He never directly mentions the fact of Christ's ascension, but he always implies it. So too with St. Paul and the other apostolic writers of the New Testament. It would be simply impossible to exhibit in detail the manner in which this doctrine pervades and underlies all St. Paul's teaching. The ascended Saviour occupies the same position in St. Paul's earliest as in his latest writings. Is he speaking of the lives of the Thessalonians in his First Epistle to that Church: "they are waiting for God's Son from heaven." Is he pointing them forward to the second advent of Christ: it is of that day he speaks when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." Is he in Rom. viii. dwelling upon the abiding security of God's elect: he enlarges upon their privileges in "Christ Jesus, who is at the right hand of God, making intercession for us." Is he exhorting the Colossians to a supernatural life: it is because they have supernatural privileges in their ascended Lord. "If ye then were raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God." The more closely the teaching of the Apostles is examined, the more clearly we shall perceive that the ascension was for them no ideal act, no imaginary or fantastic elevation, but a real actual passing of the risen Saviour out of the region and order of the seen and the natural into the region and order of the unseen

and supernatural. Just as really as they believed Christ to have risen from the dead, just as really did they in turn believe Him to have ascended into the heavens.

II. But some one may raise curious questions as to the facts of the ascension. Whither, for instance, it may be asked, did our Lord depart when He left this earthly scene? The childish notion that He went up and up far above the most distant star will not of course stand a moment's reflection. It suits the apprehension of childhood, and the innocent illusion should not be too rudely broken; but still, as the advance of years and of wisdom dispels other illusions, so too will this one depart, when the child learns that there is neither up nor down in this visible universe of ours, and that if we were ourselves transported to the moon, which seems shining over our heads, we should see the earth suspended in the blue azure which would overhang the moon and its newly-arrived inhabitants. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles does not describe our Saviour as thus ascending through infinite space. It simply describes Him as removed from off this earthly ball, and then, a cloud shutting Him out from view, Christ passed into the inner and unseen universe wherein He now dwells. The existence of that inner and unseen universe, asserted clearly enough in Scripture, has of late years been curiously confirmed by scientific speculation. Scripture asserts the existence of such an unseen universe, and the ascension implies it. The second coming of our Saviour is never described as a descent from some far-off region. No, it is always spoken of as an Apocalypse,—a drawing back, that is, of a veil which hides an unseen chamber. The angels, as the messengers of their

Divine Master, are described by Christ in Matt. xiii. as "coming forth" from the secret place of the Most High to execute His behests.[1] What a solemn light such a scriptural view sheds upon life! The unseen world is not at some vast distance, but, as the ascension would seem to imply, close at hand, shut out from us by that thin veil of matter which angelic hands will one day rend for ever. And then how wondrously the speculations of that remarkable book to which I have referred, *The Unseen Universe*, lend themselves to this scriptural idea, pointing out the necessity imposed by modern scientific thought for postulating some such interior spiritual sphere, of which the external and material universe may be regarded as a temporary manifestation and development.[2] The doctrine of the ascension, when rightly understood, presents then no difficulties from a scientific point of view, but is rather in strictest accordance with the highest and subtlest forms of modern thought. But when we advance still closer to the heart of this doctrine, and endeavour, quite apart from all mere carping criticism, to realize its meaning and its power, we shall perceive a profound fitness, beauty, and harmony in this mysterious fact. Laying apart all carping criticism, I say, because the critical spirit is not appreciative, it is on the look-out for faults, it necessarily involves a certain assumption of superiority in the critic to the thing or doctrine criticised; and most

[1] See Archbishop Trench on the Draw-net in *Notes on the Parables*, p. 145, 10th ed.

[2] We now live so fast that it may perhaps be necessary to explain that the *Unseen Universe* was a book written some ten or eleven years ago by two eminent scientists, showing how that it was needful, on the principles, of modern science, to postulate the existence of an unseen universe, out of which the seen universe has been derived, and into which it is in turn passing.

certainly it is not to the proud critic, but to the humble soul alone, that the doctrines of the Cross yield of their sweetness, and make revelation of their profound depths. We can perceive a fitness and a naturalness in the ascension; we can advance even farther still, and behold an absolute necessity for it, if Christ's work was to be perfected in all its details, and Christianity to become, not a narrow local religion, but a universal and catholic Church.

III. The ascension was a fitting and a natural termination of Christ's earthly ministry, considering the Christian conception of His sacred Personality. When the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity wished to reveal the life of God among men, and to elevate humanity by associating it for ever with the person of Him who was the Eternal God, He left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and entered upon the world of humanity through a miraculous door. "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance." These are the careful, accurate, well-balanced words of the second Article of the Church of England, in which all English-speaking Christians substantially agree. They are accurate, I say, and well-balanced, avoiding the Scylla of Nestorianism, which divides Christ's person, on the one side, and the Charybdis of Eutychianism, which denies His humanity, on the other. The Person of God, the Eternal Word, assumed human nature, not a human person, but human nature, so that God might be able, acting in and through this human nature as His instrument, to teach mankind and to die for mankind. God entered upon the sphere of the seen and the

temporal by a miraculous door. His life and work were marked all through by miracle, His death and resurrection were encompassed with miracle; and it was fitting, considering the whole course of His earthly career, that His departure from this world should be through another miraculous door. The departure of the Eternal King was, like His first approach, a part of a scheme which forms one united and harmonious whole. The Incarnation and the Ascension were necessarily related the one to the other.

IV. Again, we may advance a step further, and say that not only was the ascension a natural and fitting termination to the activities of the Eternal Son manifest in the flesh, it was a necessary completion and finish. "It is expedient," said Christ Himself, "that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you." For some reason secret from us, but hidden in the awful depths of that Being who is the beginning and the end, the source and the condition of all created existence, the return of Christ to the bosom of the Father was absolutely necessary before the outpouring of the Divine Spirit of Life and Love could take place. How this can have been we know not. We only know the fact as revealed to us by Jesus Christ and affirmed by His Apostles. "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear," is the testimony of the illuminated Apostle St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, speaking in strict unison with the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself as reported in St. John's Gospel. But without endeavouring to intrude into these mysteries of the Divine nature, into which even the angels themselves pry not, we behold in the character and constitution of

Christ's Church and Christ's religion sufficient reasons to show us the Divine expediency of our Lord's ascension. Let us take the matter very plainly and simply thus. Had our Lord not ascended into the unseen state whence He had emerged for the purpose of rescuing mankind from that horrible pit, that mire and clay of pollution, immorality, and selfishness in which it lay at the epoch of the Christian era, He must in that case (always proceeding on the supposition that He had risen from the dead, because we always suppose our readers to be believers) have remained permanently or temporarily resident in some one place. He might have chosen Jerusalem, the city of the great King, as His abode, and this would have seemed to the religious men of His time quite natural. The same instinct of religious conservatism which made the Twelve to tarry at Jerusalem even when persecution seemed to threaten the infant Church with destruction, would have led the risen Christ to fix His abode at the city which every pious Jew regarded as the special seat of Jehovah. There would have been nothing to tempt Him to Antioch, or Athens, or Alexandria, or Rome. None of these cities could have held out any inducement or put forward any claim comparable for one moment with that which the name, the traditions, and the circumstances of Jerusalem triumphantly maintained. Nay, rather the tone and temper of those cities must have rendered them abhorrent as dwelling-places to the great Teacher of holiness and purity.

At any rate, the risen Saviour, if He remained upon earth, must have chosen some one place where His presence and His personal glory would have been manifested. Now let us contemplate, and work out in some detail, the results which would have inevitably

followed. The place chosen by our Lord as His visible dwelling-place must then have become the centre of the whole Church. At that spot pilgrims from every land must necessarily have assembled. To it would have resorted the doubter to have his difficulties resolved, the sick and weak to have their ailments cured, the men of profound devotion to bathe themselves and lose themselves in the immediate presence of Incarnate Deity. All interest in local Churches or local work would have been destroyed, because every eye and every heart would be perpetually turning towards the one spot where the risen Lord was dwelling, and where personal adoration could be paid to Him. All honest, manly self-reliance would have been lost for individuals, for Churches, and for nations. Whenever a difficulty or controversy arose, either in the personal or ecclesiastical, the social or political sphere, men, instead of trying to solve it for themselves under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, would have hurried off with it to the Fount of supernatural wisdom, as an oracle, like the fabled pagan ones of old, whence direction would infallibly be gained. Judaism would have triumphed and the dispensation of the Spirit would have ceased.

The whole idea, too, of Christianity as a scheme of moral probation would have been overthrown. Christ as belonging to the supernatural sphere would of course have been raised above the laws of time and space. For Him the powers of earth and the terrors of earth would have had no meaning, and heavenly glory, shooting forth from His sacred Person, would have compelled obedience and acceptance of His laws at the hands of His most deadly and obstinate foes. Sight would have taken the place of faith, and the terrified submission of slaves would have been substituted for

the moral, loving obedience of the regenerate soul. The whole social order of life would also have been overthrown. God has now placed men in families, societies, and nations, that they might be proved by the very difficulties of their positions. The probation which God thereby exercises over men extends not to those alone who are subject to government, but to those as well who are entrusted with government. God by His present system tries governors and governed, kings and subjects, magistrates and people, parents and children, teachers and pupils, all alike. Any one who has ever made the experiment knows, however, how impossible it is to give full play to one's power and faculties, whether of government or of teaching, when overlooked by the conscious presence of one who can supersede and control all the arrangements made or all the instructions offered. Nervousness comes in, and paralyzes the best efforts a man might otherwise make. So would it have been had Christ remained upon earth. Neither those placed in authority nor those set under authority would have done their best or played their part effectually, feeling there was One standing by whose all-piercing gaze could see the imperfection of their noblest actions. A modern illustration or two will perhaps exhibit more plainly what we mean. London, with its enormous and ever-growing population, constitutes in many respects a portentous danger to our national life. But thoughtful colonists often see in it a danger which does not strike us here at home. London has a tendency to sap the springs of local interest and local self-reliance. Every colonist who attains to wealth and position feels himself an exile till he can get back to London, which he regards as the one centre of the empire worth living at; while the

colonies, viewing London as the centre of England's wealth, power, and resources, feel naturally inclined to fling upon London the care and responsibility of the empire's protection, in which all its separate parts should take their proportionate share.

Or again, let us take an illustration from the ecclesiastical sphere. M. Renan is a writer who has depicted the early history of the Church from a sceptical point of view. He has done so with all the skill of a novelist, aided by the resources of immense erudition. Before Renan became a sceptic he was a Roman Catholic, and a student for the priesthood in one of those narrow seminaries wherein exclusively the Roman Church now trains her clergy. Renan can never, therefore, view Christianity save through a Roman medium, and from a Roman Catholic standpoint. Descended himself from a Jewish stock, and trained up in Roman Catholic ideas, Renan, sceptic though he be, is lost in admiration of the Papacy, because it has combined the Jewish and the ancient imperial ideas, so that Rome having taken the place which Jerusalem once occupied in the spiritual organisation, has now become the local centre of unity for the Latin Church, where Christ's vicar visibly bears sway, to whom resort can be had from every land as an authoritative guide, and whence he and he alone dispenses with more than imperial sway the gifts and graces of Divine love. Rome is for the Latin Church the centre of the earth, and upon Rome and its spiritual ruler all interest is concentrated as Christ's earthly representative and deputy. Now what London is to our own colonists, what Rome is for its adherents, such, and infinitely more, would the localised presence of Jesus Christ have been for the Christian world had not the ascension taken place.

The Papacy, instead of securing the universality of the Church, strikes a deadly blow at it. The Papacy, with its centralised ecclesiastical despotism, is not the Catholic Church, it is simply the local Church of Rome spread out into all the world; just as Judaism never was and never could have been catholic in its ideal, no matter how widely spread it was, from the shores of the British Islands in the West to the far-distant regions of China in the East. Its adherents, like the eunuch of Ethiopia, never felt a local interest in their religion,—their eyes ever turned towards Zion, the city of the great King. And so would it have been with the bodily presence of Christ manifested in one spot; the Christian Church would still have remained a purely local institution, and the place where the risen Saviour was manifested would have been for Christian people the one centre towards which all their thoughts would gravitate, to the complete neglect of those home interests and labours in which each individual Church ought to find the special work appointed for it by the Master. It was expedient for the Church that Christ should go away, to deepen faith, to strengthen Christian self-reliance, to offer play and scope for the power and work of the Holy Ghost, to render life a testing-ground, and a place of probation for the higher life to come. But above all, it was expedient that Christ should go away in order that the Church might rise out of and above that narrow provincialism in which the Jewish spirit would fain bind it, might attain to a truly universal and catholic position, and thus fulfil the Master's magnificent prophecy to the woman of Samaria, when, viewing in spirit the Church's onward march, beholding it bursting all local and national bonds, recognising it as the religion

of universal humanity, He proclaimed its destiny in words which shall never die—"Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The ascension of Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary to equip the Church for its universal mission, by withdrawing the bodily presence of Christ into that unseen region which bears no special relation to any terrestrial locality, but is the common destiny, the true fatherland, of all the sons of God.[1]

V. We have now seen how the ascension was needful for the Church, by rendering Christ an ideal object of worship for the whole human race, thus saving it from that tendency to mere localism which would have utterly changed its character. We can also trace another great blessing involved in it. The ascension glorified humanity as humanity, and ennobled man viewed simply as man. The ascension thus transformed life by adding a new dignity to life and to life's duties.

This was a very necessary lesson for the ancient world, especially the ancient Gentile world, which Christ came to enlighten and to save. Man, considered by himself as man, had no peculiar dignity in the popular religious estimate of Greece and Rome. A Greek or a Roman was a dignified person, not, however, in virtue of his humanity, but in virtue of his Greek or Roman citizenship. The most pious Greeks or Romans simply despised mankind as such, regarding all other nations

[1] The line of thought here worked our was originally suggested to me by Canon Liddon's sermon on "Our Lord's Ascension the Church's Gain," in his first series of University sermons.

as barbarians, and treating them accordingly. Roman law exempted Roman citizens from degrading and cruel punishments, which they reserved for men outside the limits of Roman citizenship, because that humanity as humanity had no dignity attached to it in their estimation. The gladiatorial shows were the most striking illustration of this contempt for human nature which paganism inculcated.[1]

It is a notable evidence, too, of the firm grasp upon the popular mind this contempt had taken, of the awful depths to which the fatal infection had permeated the public conscience, that it was not till four hundred years after the Incarnation, and not till one hundred years after the triumph of Christianity, that these frightful carnivals of human blood and slaughter yielded to the gentler and nobler principles of the religion of the Cross. No name indeed in the long roll of Christian martyrs, who for truth and righteousness have laid down their lives, deserves higher mention than that of Telemachus, the Asiatic monk, who, in the year 404, hearing that the city, where the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul had suffered, was still disgraced by the gladiatorial shows, made his way to Rome, and by the sacrifice of his own life terminated them for ever within the bounds of Christendom. Telemachus rushed between the combatants in the arena, flung them asunder, and then was stoned to death by the mob, infuriated at the interruption

[1] The gladiatorial shows form an interesting standard by which we may compare the practical effects of Christian and the very highest pagan sentiment. Tertullian denounced them in the strongest language in his treatise *De Spectaculis*. Cicero, in the *Tusculan Disputations*, ii. 17, defends them warmly as the best discipline against fear of pain and death.

of their favourite amusement.[1] A tragic but glorious ending indeed, showing clearly how little the Roman mob realized as yet the doctrine of the sanctity of human nature; how powerful was the sway which paganism and pagan modes of thought held as yet over the populace of nominally Christian Rome; the tradition of which even still perpetuates itself in the cruel bull-fights of Spain. From the beginning, however, Christianity took exactly the opposite course, declaring to all the dignity and glory of human nature in itself. The Incarnation was in itself a magnificent proclamation of this great elevating and civilising truth. The title Son of Man, which Christ, rising above all narrow Jewish nationalism, assumed to Himself, was a republication of the same dogma; and then, to crown the whole fabric, comes the doctrine of the ascension, wherein mankind was taught that human nature as joined to the person of God has ascended into the holiest place of the universe, so that henceforth the humblest and lowliest can view his humanity as allied with that elder Brother who in the reality of human flesh—glorified, indeed, spiritualised and refined by the secret, searching processes of death—has passed within the veil, now to appear in the presence of God for us. What new light must have been shed upon life—the life of the barbarian and of the slave—crushed beneath the popular theory of St. Paul's day![2] What new dignity this doctrine imparted to the bodies of the outcast and despised,

[1] The original authority for the story of Telemachus is Theodoret's *Eccles. Hist.*, v. 26. It is vigorously told by Gibbon in the thirtieth chapter of his *Decline and Fall.*

[2] The doctrine of the sanctity of human life was unknown under paganism. Tacitus tells us, about the year A.D. 61, how that Pedianus

counted fit food only for the cross, the stake, or the arena! Man might despise them and ill-treat them, yet their bodies were made like unto the one glorious Body for ever united to God, and therefore they were comforted, elevated, enabled to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Cannot we see many examples of the consoling, elevating power of the ascension in the New Testament? Take St. Paul's writings, and there we trace the influence of the ascension in every page. Take the very lowest case. Slaves under the conditions of ancient society occupied the most degraded position. Their duties were of the humblest type, their treatment of the worst description, their punishments of the most terrible character.[1] Yet for even these oppressed and degraded beings the doctrine of the ascension transformed life, because it endowed that menial service which they rendered with a new dignity. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God." And why? Because life has been enriched

Secundus, prefect of the city, having been murdered by one of his slaves, the whole body of his slaves, numbering more than four hundred persons, of every age and sex, were put to death (*Annals*, xiv., 42-45).

[1] We have no idea of the frightful character of pagan slavery. The worst form which negro slavery ever took never approached it. The following story will give our readers some idea of it. Cato, the censor, wrote a treatise, very little read or known, called *De Re Rustica*, treating of farming operations. In this he gives directions concerning the economical management of slaves, and among other things tells how wine for their winter consumption was to be prepared. "Put into a cask ten amphoræ of sweet wine, two amphoræ of sour vinegar, and as much wine boiled down by two-thirds. Add fifty amphoræ of pure water. Mix all together with a stick three times a day for five consecutive days. After this add sixty-four amphoræ of stale salt and water."

with a new motive: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." *Ye serve the Lord Christ.* That was the supreme point. The cooking of a dinner, the dressing of an imperious lady's hair, the teaching of a careless or refractory pupil—all these things were transfigured into the service of the ascended Lord. And as with the servant, so was it with their masters. The ascension furnished them with a new and practical motive, which, at first leading to kindly treatment and generous actions, would one day, by the force of logical deduction as well as of Christian principle, lead to the utter extinction of slavery. "Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." The doctrine of the ascension diffused sweetness and light throughout the whole Christian system, furnishing a practical motive, offering an ever-present and eternal sanction, urging men upwards and onwards; without which neither the Church nor the world would ever have reached that high level of mercy, charity, and purity which men now enjoy. Perhaps here again the present age may see the doctrine of the ascension asserting its glory and its power in the same direction. Much of modern speculation tends to debase and belittle the human body, teaching theories respecting its origin which have a natural tendency to degrade the popular standard. If people come to think of their bodies as derived from a low source, they will be apt to think a low standard of morals as befitting bodies so descended. The doctrine of evolution has not, to say the least, an elevating influence upon the masses. I say nothing against it.

One or two passages in the Bible, as Gen. ii. 7, seem to support it, appearing, as that verse does, to make a division between the creation of the body of man and the creation of his spirit.[1] But the broad tendency of such speculation lies in a downward moral direction. Here the doctrine of the ascension steps in to raise for us, as it raised for the materialists of St. Paul's day, the standard of current conceptions, and to teach men a higher and a nobler view. We leave to science the investigation of the past and of the lowly sources whence man's body may have come; but the doctrine of the ascension speaks of its present sanctity and of its future glory, telling of the human body as a body of humiliation and of lowliness indeed, but yet proclaiming it as even now, in the person of Christ, ascended into the heavens, and seated on the throne of the Most High. It may have been once humble in its origin; it is now glorious in its dignity and elevation; and that dignity and that elevation shed a halo upon human nature, no matter how degraded and wherever it may be found, because it is like unto that Body, the firstfruits of humanity, which stands at the right hand of God. Thus the doctrine of the ascension becomes for the Christian the ever-flowing fountain of dignity, of purity, and of mercy, teaching us to call no man common or unclean, because all have been made like unto the image of the Son of God.

[1] See St. George Mivart, *Genesis of Species*, p. 282. The whole chapter (xii) on Theology and Evolution is well worth careful study.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ELECTION OF MATTHIAS.

"They prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." —ACTS i. 24-6.

WE have selected the incident of this apostolic election as the central point round which to group the events of the ten days' expectation which elapsed between the Ascension and Pentecost. But though this election is a most important fact, in itself and in the principles involved therein, yet there are numerous other circumstances in this waiting time which demand and will amply repay our thoughtful attention.

I. There is, for instance, the simple fact that ten days were allowed to elapse between Christ's departure and the fulfilment of His promise to send the Comforter to take His place with His bereaved flock. The work of the world's salvation depended upon the outcome of this Divine agent. "Tarry ye in the city till ye be endued with power from on high;" and all the time souls were hurrying on to destruction, and society was becoming worse and worse, and Satan's hold upon the world was daily growing in strength. God, however, acted in this interval according to the principles we see illus-

trated in nature as well as in revelation. He does nothing in a hurry. The Incarnation was postponed for thousands of years. When the Incarnation took place, Christ grew up slowly, and developed patiently, till the day of His manifestation to Israel. And now that Christ's public work on earth was done, there is no haste in the further development of the plan of salvation, but ten days are suffered to elapse before His promise is fulfilled. What a rebuke we read in the Divine methods of that faithless unbelieving haste which marks and mars so many of our efforts for truth and righteousness, and specially so in these concluding years of the nineteenth century. Never did the Church stand more in need of the lesson so often thus impressed upon her by her Divine Teacher. As Christ did not strive nor cry, neither did any man hear His voice in the streets, so neither did He make haste, because He lived animated by Divine strength and wisdom, which make even apparent delay and defeat conduce to the attainment of the highest ends of love and mercy. And so, too, Christ's Church still does not need the bustle, the haste, the unnatural excitement which the world thinks needful, because she labours under a sense of Divine guidance, and imitates His example who kept His Apostles waiting ten long days before He fulfilled His appointed promise. What a lesson of comfort, again, this Divine delay teaches! We are often inclined to murmur in secret at the slow progress of God's Church and kingdom. We think that if we had the management of the world's affairs things would have been ordered otherwise, and the progress of truth be one long-continued march of triumph. A consideration of the Divine delays in the past helps us to bear this burden, though it may not explain the difficulty. God's

delays have turned out to His greater glory in the past, and they who wait patiently upon Him will find the Divine delays of the present dispensation equally well ordered.

II. Then again, how carefully, even in His delays, God honours the elder dispensation, though now it had grown old and was ready to vanish away. Christianity had none of that revolutionary spirit which makes a clean sweep of old institutions to build up a new fabric in their stead. Christianity, on the contrary, rooted itself in the past, retained old institutions and old ideas, elevating indeed and spiritualising them, and thus slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent. This truly conservative spirit of the new dispensation is manifest in every arrangement, and specially reveals itself in the times selected for the great events of our Lord's ministry—Easter, Ascension, then the ten days of expectation, and then Pentecost. And it was most fitting that it should be so. The old dispensation was a shadow and picture of the higher and better covenant one day to be unfolded. Moses was told to make the tabernacle after the pattern shown to him in the mount, and the whole typical system of Judaism was modelled after a heavenly original to which Christ conformed in the work of man's salvation.

At the first Passover, the paschal lamb was offered up and the deliverance from Egypt effected; and so, too, at the Passover the true Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ, was presented unto God as an acceptable sacrifice, and the deliverance effected of the true Israel from the spiritual Egypt of the world. Forty days after the Passover, Israel came to the mount of God, into which Moses ascended that he might receive gifts for the people; and forty days after the last great Paschal

Offering, the great spiritual Captain and Deliverer ascended into the Mount of God, that He, in turn, might receive highest spiritual blessings and a new law of life for God's true people. Then there came the ten days of expectation and trial, when the Apostles were called to wait upon God and prove the blessings of patient abiding upon Him, just as the Israelites were called to wait upon God while Moses was absent in the mount. But how different the conduct of the Apostles from that of the more carnal Jews! How typical of the future of the two religions—the Jewish and the Christian! The Jews walked by sight, and not by faith; they grew impatient, and made an image, the golden calf, to be their visible Deity. The Apostles tarried in patience, because they were walking by faith, and they received in return the blessing of an ever-present unseen Guide and Comforter to lead them, and all who like them seek His help, into the ways of truth and peace. And then, when the waiting time is past, the feast of Pentecost comes, and at Pentecost, the feast of the giving of the old law, as the Jews counted it, the new law of life and power, written not on stony tables, but on the fleshy tables of the heart, is granted in the gift of the Divine Comforter. All the lines of the old system are carefully followed, and Christianity is thus shown to be, not a novel invention, but the development and fulfilment of God's ancient purposes.[1] We can scarcely appreciate nowadays the importance and stress laid upon this view among the ancient expositors and apologists. It was a favourite taunt used by the pagans of Greece and Rome against Christianity that it

[1] See on this point Dr. John Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, Acts ii. 1; and a sermon by the learned Joseph Mede of Cambridge on Deut. xvi. 16, 17, in his *Works*, vol. i., p. 350 (London, 1664).

was only a religion of yesterday, a mere novelty, as compared with their own systems, which descended to them from the dawn of history. This taunt has been indeed most useful in its results for us moderns, because it led the ancient Christians to pay the most careful attention to chronology and historical studies, producing as the result works like *The Chronicle of Eusebius*, to which secular history itself owes the greatest obligations.

The heathens reproached Christians with the novelty of their faith, and then the early Christians replied by pointing to history, which proved that the Jewish religion was far older than any other, maintaining at the same time that Christianity was merely the development of the Jewish religion, the completion and fulfilment in fact and reality of what Judaism had shadowed forth in the ritual of the Passover and of Pentecost.[1]

[1] See this point worked out in Dr. Salmon's article *Chronica*, in the first volume of the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, and in the opening of his article on *The Chronicle of Eusebius* in the second volume of the same work. A brief extract from one of the earliest and most learned apologists, who lived about the middle of the second century, will show how the Christians elaborated this argument. Tatian, in ch. xl. of his *Oration to the Greeks*, speaks thus: "Therefore from what has been said it is evident that Moses was older than the ancient heroes, wars, and demons. And we ought rather to believe him, who stands before them in point of age, than the Greeks, who, without being aware of it, drew his doctrines as from a fountain. For many of the sophists among them, stimulated by curiosity, endeavoured to adulterate whatever they learned from Moses, and from those who philosophised like him, first that they might be considered as having something of their own, and secondly, that covering up by a certain rhetorical artifice whatever things they did not understand, they might misrepresent the truth as if it were a fable. But what the learned among the Greeks have said concerning our polity and the history of our laws, and how many and what kind of men have written of these things, will be shown in the treatise against those who have discoursed of Divine things."

III. We notice again in this connection the place where the Apostles met, and the manner in which they continued to assemble after the ascension, and while they waited for the fulfilment of the Master's promise: "They returned unto Jerusalem, and they went up into an upper chamber." Round this upper room at Jerusalem has gathered many a story dating from very early ages indeed. The upper room in which they assembled has been identified with the chamber in which the Last Supper was celebrated, and where the gift of the Holy Ghost was first received, and that from ancient times. Epiphanius, a Christian writer of the fourth century, to whom we owe much precious information concerning the early ages of the Church, tells us that there was a church built on this spot even in Hadrian's time, that is, about the year 120 A.D.[1] The Empress Helena, again, the mother of Constantine the Great, identified or thought she identified the spot, and built a splendid church to mark it out for all time; and succeeding ages have spent much care and thought upon it. St. Cyril of Jerusalem was a writer little referred to and little known in our day, who yet has much precious truth to teach us. He was a learned bishop of Jerusalem about the middle of the fourth century, and he left us catechetical lectures, showing what pains and trouble the Early Church took in the inculcation of the fundamental articles of the Christian creed. His catechetical lectures, delivered to the candidates for baptism, contain much valuable evidence of the belief, the practice, and the discipline of the early ages, and they mention among other points the church built upon Mount Zion on the spot once

[1] **Epiphanius,** *On Weights and Measures*, ch. xiv.

occupied by this upper room. The tradition, then, which deals with this chamber and points out its site goes back to the ages of persecution; and yet it is notable how little trouble the book of the Acts of the Apostles takes in this matter. It is just the same with this upper chamber as with the other localities in which our Lord's mighty works were wrought. The Gospels tell us not where His temptations occurred, though man has often tried to fix the exact locality. The site of the Transfiguration and of the true Mount of Beatitudes has engaged much human curiosity; the scene of Peter's vision at Joppa and of St. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus,—all these and many other divinely honoured localities of the Old as well as of the New Testament have been shrouded from us in thickest darkness, that we might learn not to fix our eyes upon the external husk, the locality, the circumstances, the time, which are nothing, but upon the interior spirit, the love, the unity, the devotion and self-sacrifice which constitute in the Divine sight the very heart and core of our holy religion.[1] They assembled themselves, too, in this upper chamber in a united spirit, such as Christianity, though only in an undeveloped shape, already dictated. The Apostles "continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women also, and Mary, the mother of Jesus." The spirit of Christianity was, I say, already manifesting itself.

In the temple, as in the synagogues to this day,

[1] The traditions about the upper chamber are given at length in Fr. Quaresmius, *Terræ Sanctæ Elucidatio*, t. ii., p. 119 (Antwerp, 1639), with which may be compared Bingham's *Antiquities*, bk. viii., ch. i., sec. 13; Mede's *Discourse of Churches* in his *Works*, vol. i., p. 408; and Bishop Milles' notes on Cyril's *Catech.*, xvi. 2, in his edition of that writer, p. 225.

the women prayed in a separate place; they were not united with the men, but parted from them by a screen. But in Christ Jesus there was to be neither male nor female. The man in virtue of his manhood had no advantage or superiority over the woman in virtue of her womanhood; and so the Apostles gathered themselves at the footstool of their common Father in union with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus. How simple, again, this last mention of the Blessed Virgin Mother of the Lord! how strangely and strongly contrasted the scriptural record is with the fables and legends which have grown up round the memory of her whom all generations must ever call blessed. Nothing, in fact, shows more plainly the historic character of the book we are studying than a comparison of this last simple notice with the legend of the assumption of the Blessed Virgin as it has been held since the fifth century, and as it is now believed in the Church of Rome. The popular account of this fabled incident arose in the East amid the controversies which rent the Church concerning the Person of Christ in the fifth century. It taught that the Holy Virgin, a year or so after the ascension, besought the Lord to release her; upon which the angel Gabriel was sent to announce her departure in three days' time. The Apostles were thereupon summoned from the different parts of the world whither they had departed. John came from Ephesus, Peter from Rome, Thomas from India, each being miraculously wafted on a cloud from his special sphere of labour, while those of the apostolic company who had died were raised for the occasion. On the third day the Lord descended from heaven with the angels, and took to Himself the soul of the Virgin. The Jews then attempted to burn the body, which was miracu-

lously rescued and buried in a new tomb, prepared by Joseph of Arimathea in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. For two days the angels were heard singing at the tomb, but on the third day their songs ceased, and the Apostles then knew that the body had been transferred to Paradise. St. Thomas was indeed vouchsafed a glimpse of her ascension, and at his request she dropped him her girdle as a token, whereupon he went to his brother Apostles and declared her sepulchre to be empty. The Apostles regarded this as merely a sign of his customary incredulity, but on the production of the girdle they were convinced, and on visiting the grave found the body was gone.[1]

Can any contrast be greater or more striking between the inspired narrative, composed for the purpose of ministering to godly life and practice, and such legendary fables as this, invented to gratify mere human curiosity, or to secure a temporary controversial triumph? The Divine narrative shrouds in thickest darkness details which have no spiritual significance, no direct bearing on the work of man's salvation. The human fable intrudes into the things unseen, and revels with a childish delight in the regions of the supernatural and miraculous.

What a striking likeness do we trace between the composition of the Acts and of the Gospels in this direction! The self-restraint of the evangelical writers is wondrous. Had the Evangelists been mere human biographers, how they would have delighted to expatiate on the childhood and youth and earlier years of Christ's manhood. The apocryphal Gospels composed in the second and third centuries show us what our Gospels

[1] See, for a fuller account, Salmon's *Introduction N. T.*, 4th ed., pp. 384-86, and the references there given.

would have been had they been written by men destitute of an abundant supply of the Divine Spirit. They enter into the most minute incidents of our Lord's childhood, tell us of His games, His schoolboy days, of the flashes of the supernatural glory which ever betrayed the awful Being who lay hidden beneath. The Gospels, on the other hand, fling a hallowed and reverent veil over all the details, or almost all the details, of our Lord's early life. They tell us of His birth, and its circumstances and surroundings, that we might learn the needful lesson of the infinite glory, the transcendent greatness of lowliness and humiliation. They give us a glimpse of our Lord's development when twelve years old, that we may learn the spiritual strength and force which are produced through the discipline of obedience and patient waiting upon God; and then all else is concealed from human vision till the hour was come for the manifestation of the full-orbed God-Man. And as it was with the Eternal Son, so was it with that earthly parent whom the consensus of universal Christendom has agreed to honour as the type of devout faith, of humble submission, of loving motherhood. Fable has grown thick round her in mere human narrative, but when we turn to the inspired Word, whether in the Gospels or in the Acts,—for it is all the same in both,—we find a story simple, restrained, and yet captivating in all its details, ministering indeed to no prurient curiosity, yet rich in all the materials which serve to devout meditation, culminating in this last record, where the earthly parent finally disappears from out of sight, eclipsed by the heavenly glory of the Divine Son:—"These all continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus."

IV. And then we have the record of the apostolic election, which is rich in teaching. We note the person who took the first step, and his character, so thoroughly in unison with that picture which the four Gospels present. St. Peter was not a forward man in the bad sense of the word, but he possessed that energetic, forcible character to which men yield a natural leadership. Till St. Paul appeared St. Peter was regarded as the spokesman of the apostolic band, just as during our Lord's earthly ministry the same position was by tacit consent accorded to him. He was one of those men who cannot remain inactive, especially when they see anything wanting. There are some men who can see a defect just as clearly, but their first thought is, What have I to do with it? They behold the need, but it never strikes them that they should attempt to rectify it. St. Peter was just the opposite: when he saw a fault or a want his disposition and his natural gifts at once impelled him to strive to rectify it. When our Lord, in view of the contending rumours afloat concerning His ministry and authority, applied this searching test to His Apostles, "But whom do ye say that I am?" it was Peter that boldly responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Just as a short time afterwards the same Peter incurred Christ's condemnation when he rebuked the Saviour for the prophecy of His forthcoming death and humiliation. The character of St. Peter as depicted in the Gospels and the Acts is at unison with itself. It is that of one ever generous, courageous, intensely sympathetic, impulsive, but deficient, as impulsive and sympathetic characters often are, in that staying power, that capacity to bear up under defeat, discouragement, and darkness which so conspicuously marked out the

great Apostle of the Gentiles, and made him such a pillar in the spiritual temple of the New Jerusalem. Yet St. Peter did his own work, for God can ever find employment suitable to every type of that vast variety of temperament which finds shelter beneath the roof of Christ's Church. St. Peter's impulsiveness, chastened by prayer, solemnized by his own sad personal experience, deepened by the bitter sorrow consequent on his terrible fall, urged him to take the first conscious step as the leader of the newly-constituted society. How very similar the Peter of the Acts is to the Peter of St. Matthew; what an undesigned evidence of the truth of these records we trace in the picture of St. Peter presented by either narrative! Just as St. Peter was in the Gospels the first to confess at Cæsarea, the first to strike in the garden, the first to fail in the high priest's palace, so was he the first "to stand up in these days in the midst of the brethren," and propose the first corporate movement on the Church's part.

Here again we note that his attitude at this apostolic election proves that the interviews which St. Peter held with Christ after the Resurrection must have been lengthened, intimate, and frequent, for St. Peter's whole view of the Christian organization seems thoroughly changed. Christ had continued with His Apostles during forty days, speaking to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God; and St. Peter, as he had been for years one of the Lord's most intimate friends, so he doubtless still held the same trusted position in these post-resurrection days. The Lord revealed to him the outlines of His kingdom, and sketched for him the main lines of its development, teaching him that the Church was not to be a knot of personal disciples, dependent upon His manifested bodily presence, and

dissolving into its original elements as soon as that bodily presence ceased to be realized by the eye of sense; but was rather to be a corporation with perpetual succession, to use legal language, whose great work was to be an unceasing witness to Christ's resurrection. If Peter's mind had not been thus illuminated and guided by the personal instruction of Christ, how came it to pass that prior to the descent of the Spirit the Apostles move with no uncertain step in this matter, and unhesitatingly fill up the blank in the sacred college by the election of Matthias into the place left vacant by the terrible fall of Judas? The speech of St. Peter and the choice of this new Apostle reflect light back upon the forty days of waiting. No objection is raised, no warm debate takes place such as heralded the solution of the vexed question concerning circumcision at the council of Jerusalem; no one suggests that as Christ Himself had not supplied the vacancy the choice should be postponed till after the fulfilment of the Master's mysterious promise, because they were all instructed as to our Lord's wishes by the conversations held with Christ during His risen and glorified life.

Let us pause a little to meditate upon an objection which might have been here raised. Why fill up what Christ Himself left vacant? some short-sighted objector might have urged; and yet we see good reason why Christ may have omitted to supply the place of Judas, and may have designed that the Apostles themselves should have done so. Our Lord Jesus Christ gifted His Apostles with corporate power; He bestowed upon them authority to act in His stead and name; and it is not God's way of action to grant power and authority, and then to

allow it to remain unexercised and undeveloped. When God confers any gift He expects that it shall be used for His honour and man's benefit. The Lord had bestowed upon the Apostles the highest honour, the most wondrous power ever given to men. He had called them to an office of which He Himself had spoken very mysterious things. He had told them that, in virtue of the apostolic dignity conferred upon them, they should in the regeneration of all things sit upon thrones, judging the twelves tribes of Israel. He had spoken, too, of a mysterious authority with which they were invested, so that their decisions here upon earth would be ratified and confirmed in the region of heavenly realities. Yet when a gap is made by successful sin in the number of the mystical twelve who are to judge the twelve tribes, He leaves the selection of a new Apostle to the remaining eleven, in order that they may be compelled to stir up the grace of God which was in them, and to exercise the power entrusted to them under a due sense of responsibility. The Lord thus wished to teach the Church from earliest days to walk alone. The Apostles had been long enough depending on His personal presence and guidance, and now, that they might learn to exercise the privileges and duties of their Divine freedom, He leaves them to choose one to fill that position of supernatural rank and office from which Judas had fallen. The risen Saviour acted in grace as God ever acts in nature. He bestowed His gifts lavishly and generously, and then expected man to respond to the gifts by making that good use of them which earnest prayer, sanctified reason, and Christian common-sense dictated.

St. Peter's action is notable, too, in another aspect

St. Peter was undoubtedly the natural leader of the apostolic band during those earliest days of the Church's history. Our Lord Himself recognised his natural gifts as qualifying him to fulfil this position. There is no necessity for a denial on our part of the reality of St. Peter's privilege as contained in such passages as the verse which says, "I will give unto thee (Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven." He was eminently energetic, vigorous, quick in action. But we find no traces of that despotic authority as prince of the Apostles and supreme head over the whole Church with which some would fain invest St. Peter and his successors. St. Peter steps forward first on this occasion, as again on the day of Pentecost, and again before the high priest after the healing of the impotent man, and yet again at the council of Jerusalem; for, as we have already noted, St. Peter possessed in abundance that natural energy which impels a man to action without any desire for notoriety or any wish to thrust himself into positions of undue eminence. But then on every occasion St. Peter speaks as an equal to his equals. He claims no supreme authority; no authority, in fact, at all over and beyond what the others possessed. He does not, for instance, on this occasion claim the right as Christ's vicar to nominate an Apostle into the place of Judas. He merely asserts his lawful place in Christ's kingdom as first among a body of equals to suggest a course of action to the whole body which he knew to be in keeping with the Master's wishes, and in fulfilment of His revealed intentions.

V. The address of St. Peter led the Apostles to practical action. He laid the basis of it in the book of Psalms, the mystical application of which to our Lord and His

sufferings he recognises, selecting passages from the sixty-ninth and the one hundred and ninth Psalms as depicting the sin and the fate of Judas Iscariot;[1] and then sets forth the necessity of filling up the vacancy in the apostolic office, a fact of which he had doubtless been certified by the Master Himself. He speaks as if the College of the Apostles had a definite work and office; a witness peculiar to themselves as Apostles, which no others except Apostles could render. This is manifest from the language of St. Peter. He lays down the conditions of a possible Apostle: he must have been a witness of all that Jesus had done and taught from the time of His baptism to His ascension. But this qualification alone would not make a man an Apostle, or qualify him to bear the witness peculiar to the apostolic office. There were evidently numerous such witnesses, but they were not Apostles, and had none of the power and privileges of the Twelve. He must be chosen by his brother Apostles, and their choice must be endorsed by Heaven; and then the chosen witness, who had known the past, could testify to the resurrection in particular, with a weight, authority, and dignity he never possessed before. The apostolic office was the germ out of which the whole Christian ministry was developed, and the apostolic witness was typical of that witness to the resurrection which is not the duty alone, but also the strength and glory of the Christian ministry; for it is only as the ministers and witnesses of a risen and glorified Christ that they differ from the officials of a purely human association.[2]

[1] Peter may have learned this mystical mode of interpretation from our Lord Himself in His conversations. See Luke xxiv. 44-9.

[2] The intimate connection between the Christian ministry and the miraculous facts of Christianity has been powerfully argued by Charles

After St. Peter had spoken, two persons were selected as possessing the qualifications needful in the successor of Judas. Then when the Apostles had elected they prayed, and cast lots as between the two, and the final selection of Matthias was made. Questions have sometimes been raised as to this method of election, and attempts have been sometimes made to follow the precedent here set. The lot has at times been used to supersede the exercise of human judgment, not only in Church elections, but in the ordinary matters of life; but if this passage is closely examined, it will be seen that it affords no justification for any such practice. The Apostles did not use the lot so as to supersede the exercise of their own powers, or relieve them of that personal responsibility which God has imposed on men, whether as individuals, or as gathered in societies civil or ecclesiastical. The Apostles brought their private judgment into play, searched, debated, voted, and, as the result, chose two persons equally well qualified for the apostolic office. Then, when they had done their best, they left the decision to the lot, just as men often do still; and if we believe in the efficacy of

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Leslie in his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists.* He contends that the existence of the Christian ministry is a standing evidence of the supernatural facts of the gospel which can alone explain that existence. If the facts never happened, how did the Christian ministry arise? Hence he concludes the perpetual character and obligation of the ministry for Christians, or, to quote his own words, "Now the Christian priesthood, as instituted by Christ Himself, and continued by succession to this day, being as impregnable and flagrant a testimony to the truth of the matter of fact of Christ as the sacraments or any other public institutions; besides that, if the priesthood were taken away, the sacraments and other public institutions which are administered by their hands, must fall with them: therefore the devil has been most busy, and bent his greatest force, in all ages, against the priesthood, knowing that if that goes down, all goes with it."—Leslie's *Works*, vol. i., p. 27.

prayer and a particular Providence ordering the affairs of men, I do not see that any wiser course can ever be taken, under similar circumstances, than that which the Apostles adopted on this occasion. But we must be careful to observe that the Apostles did not trust to the lot absolutely and completely. That would have been trusting to mere chance. They first did their utmost, exercised their own knowledge and judgment, and then, having done their part, they prayerfully left the final result to God, in humble confidence that He would show what was best.

The two selected candidates were Joseph Barsabas and Matthias, neither of whom ever appeared before in the story of our Lord's life, and yet both had been His disciples all through His earthly career. What lessons for ourselves may we learn from these men! These two eminent servants of God, either of whom their brethren counted worthy to succeed into the apostolic College, appear just this once in the sacred narrative, and then disappear for ever. Indeed it is with the Apostles as we have already noted in the case of our Lord's life and the story of the Blessed Virgin, the self-restraint of the sacred narrative is most striking. What fields for romance! What wide scope for the exercise of imagination would the lives of the Apostles have opened out if the writers of our sacred books had not been guided and directed by a Divine power outside and beyond themselves. We are not, indeed, left without the materials for a comparison in this respect, most consoling and most instructive for the devout Christian.

Apocryphal histories of all the Apostles abound on every side, some of them dating from the second century itself. Many of them indeed are regular romances.

The Clementine Homilies and Recognitions form a religious novel, entering into the most elaborate details of the labours, preaching, and travels of the Apostle Peter. Every one of the other Apostles, and many of the earliest disciples too, had gospels forged in their honour; there was the Gospel of Peter, of Thomas, of Nicodemus, and of many others. And so it was with St. Matthias.[1] Five hundred years after Christ the Gospel of Matthias was known and repudiated as a fiction. A mass of tradition, too, grew up round him, telling of his labours and martyrdom, as some said in Ethiopia, and as others in Eastern Asia.

Clement, a writer who lived about the year 200, at Alexandria, recounts for us some sayings traditionally ascribed to St. Matthias, all of a severe and sternly ascetic tone. But in reality we know nothing either of what St. Matthias did or of what he taught. The genuine writings of apostolic times carry their own credentials with them in this respect. They are dignified and natural. They indulge in no details to exalt their heroes, or to minister to that love of the strange and marvellous which lies at the root of so much religious error. They were written to exalt Christ and Christ alone, and they deal, therefore, with the work of Apostles merely so far as the story tends to

[1] The literature of the apocryphal Gospels is very extensive. Those who wish to pursue this subject will find abundant materials in an article on "Gospels, Apocryphal" in the second volume of the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, written by Professor Lipsius of Jena; or in Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, Lect. XI. Origen mentioned the Gospel of Matthias, while again Eusebius (*H. E.*, iii., 25) describes it as heretical. See Fabricius, *Cod. Apoc. N. T.*, p. 782. The apocryphal Acts of Andrew and Matthias may be seen in Tischendorf's *Acta Apoc.*, p. 132. Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals* tells, in a convenient shape, the traditions about St. Matthias and the other Apostles.

increase the glory of the Master, not that of His servants. Surely this repression of the human agents, this withdrawal of them into the darkness of obscurity, is one of the best evidences of the genuineness of the New Testament. One or two of the earliest witnesses of the Cross have their story told at some length. Peter and Paul, when compared with James or John or Matthias, figure very largely in the New Testament narrative. But even they have allotted to them a mere brief outline of a portion of their work, and all the rest is hidden from us. The vast majority even of the Apostles have their names alone recorded, while nothing is told concerning their labours or their sufferings. If the Apostles were deceivers, they were deceivers who sought their rewards neither in this life, where they gained nothing but loss of all things, nor in the pages of history, where their own hands and the hands of their friends consigned their brightest deeds to an obscurity no eye can pierce.[1] But they were not deceivers. They were the noblest benefactors of the race, men whose minds and hearts and imaginations were filled with the glory of their risen Redeemer. Their one desire was that Christ alone should be magnified, and to this end they willed to lose themselves

[1] The dignified self-restraint of the Acts is nowhere more manifest than in its reference to Judas Iscariot. The only notice bestowed upon him is connected with the election of Matthias. Papias was a writer on the beginning of the second century. He knew some of the Apostles and early disciples, and gathered diligently every tradition about the Church's early days. Papias made an attempt to harmonise the account of the death of Judas given by St. Peter with that told in St. Matthew, which has been preserved for us by two Greek commentators, Œcumenius, who lived in the tenth, and Theophylact, who flourished in the eleventh century. The difficulty is this. St. Matthew says that Judas hanged himself; St. Peter says that he burst asunder. Papias harmo-

in the boundless sea of His risen glory. And thus they have left us a noble and inspiriting example. We are not apostles, martyrs, or confessors, yet we often find it hard to take our part and do our duty in the spirit displayed by Matthias and Joseph called Barsabas. We long for public recognition and public reward. We chafe and fret and fume internally because we have to bear our temptations and suffer our trials and do our work unknown and unrecognised by all but God. Let the example of these holy men help us to put away all such vain thoughts. God Himself is our all-seeing and our ever-present Judge. The Incarnate Master Himself is watching us. The angels and the spirits of the just made perfect are witnesses of our earthly struggles. No matter how low, how humble, how insignificant the story of our spiritual trials and struggles, they are all marked in heaven by that Divine Master who will at last reward every man, not according to his position in the world, but in strict accordance with the principles of infallible justice.

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nises the two by telling that Judas first of all hanged himself on a fig-tree, but the halter broke. He was then seized with a terrible dropsy, and swelled up to an enormous size, so that when endeavouring to pass where a waggon could go he burst asunder. The narrative of Papias is given in Theophylact on Matt. xxvii., and Œcumenius on Acts i. Dr. Routh, in his *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. i., pp. 9, 25, points out that the horrid details of the story, which cannot be here printed, are due to the Greek commentators enlarging on the simple facts stated by Papias. Origen, with characteristic daring, suggests that Judas committed suicide as soon as he saw that our Lord was condemned, in order that he might arise in the region of the dead before Him, and there seek His forgiveness. There is a curious Latin book, published in 1680, which gives all the traditions about the traitor. Its title is Kempius, *On the Life and Fate of Judas Iscariot.*

CHAPTER V.

THE PENTECOSTAL BLESSING.

"And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder (or distributing themselves), like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."—ACTS ii. 1-4.

IN these words we find the record of the event which completed the Church, and endowed it with that mysterious power which then was, and ever since has been, the source of its true life and of its highest success.

The time when the gift of the Spirit was vouchsafed is marked for us as "when the day of Pentecost was now come." Here again, as in the fact of the ascension and the waiting of the Church, we trace the outline of Christianity in Judaism, and see in the typical ceremonial of the old dispensation the outline and shadow of heavenly realities.

What was the history of the Pentecostal feast? That feast fulfilled in the Jewish system a twofold place. It was one of the great natural festivals whereby God taught His ancient people to sanctify the different portions of the year. The Passover was the feast of the first ripe corn, celebrating the beginning of

the barley harvest, as again the Pentecostal loaves set forth, solemnized, and sanctified the close of the wheat harvest. No one was permitted, according to the twenty-third of Leviticus, to partake of the fruits of the earth till the harvest had been sanctified by the presentation to God of the first ripe sheaf, just as at the greatest paschal festival ever celebrated, Christ, the first ripe sheaf of that vast harvest of humanity which is maturing for its Lord, was taken out of the grave where the rest of the harvest still lies, and presented in the inner temple of the universe as the first-fruits of humanity unto God. At Pentecost, on the other hand, it was not a sheaf but a loaf that was offered to signify the completion of the work begun at the Passover. At Pentecost the law is thus laid down: "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth parts of an ephah: they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baken with leaven, for first-fruits unto the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 17). Pentecost, therefore, was the harvest festival, the feast of in-gathering for the Jews; and when the type found its completion in Christ, Pentecost became the feast of ingathering for the nations, when the Church, the mystical body of Christ, was presented unto God to be an instrument of His glory and a blessing to the world at large. This feast, as we have already intimated, was a fitting season for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that for another reason. Pentecost was considered by the Jews as a festival commemorative of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai in the third month after they had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. It was a fitting season, therefore, for the bestowal of the Spirit, whereby the words of ancient prophecy were fulfilled, "I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their

heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer. xxxi. 33).[1]

The time when the Spirit was poured out on the assembled body of Christians, and the Church's foundations laid deep and strong, revealed profound reverence for the old dispensation, raising by anticipation a protest against the heretical teaching which became current among the Gnostics in the second century, and has often since found place in Christian circles, as amongst the Anabaptists of Germany and the Antinomians at the time of the Reformation. This view taught that there was an essential opposition between the Old and the New Testament, some maintainers of it, like the ancient Gnostics, holding that the Old Testament was the production of a spiritual being inferior and hostile to the Eternal God. The Divine Spirit guided St. Luke, however, to teach the opposite view, and is careful to honour the elder dispensation and the old covenant, showing that Christianity was simply the perfection and completion of Judaism, and was developed therefrom as naturally as the bud of spring bursts forth into the splendid blossom and flower of summer. We trace these evidences of the Divine foreknowledge, as well as of the Divine wisdom, in these Pentecostal revelations, providing for and forecasting future dangers with which, even in its earlier days, the bark of Christ's Church had desperately to struggle.[2]

[1] In the last lecture I have already given the reference to Lightfoot's and Mede's works where this point is fully worked out.

[2] The same view has practically been taught by some modern sects, who have proclaimed that all of the Old Testament and the whole of our Lord's teaching till He died were intended for Jews only, and have no relation to Christians. It is hard to say how such persons regard the Old Testament and the greater part of the four Gospels, save as interesting fossils to be hung up in a museum of comparative religion.

I. Now let us take the circumstances of the Pentecostal blessing as they are stated, for every separate detail bears with it an important message. The place and the other circumstances of the outpouring of the Spirit are full of instruction. The first disciples were all with one accord in one place. There was unity of spirit and unity in open manifestation to the world at large. Christ's disciples, when they received the gifts of heaven's choicest blessings, were not split up into dozens of different organizations, each of them hostile to the others, and each striving to aggrandise itself at the expense of kindred brotherhoods. They had keenly in remembrance the teaching of our Lord's great Eucharistic supplication when He prayed to His Father for His people that "they may all be one; even as Thou Father, art in Me, and I in Thee . . . that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." There was visible unity among the followers of Christ; there was interior love and charity, finding expression in external union which qualified the disciples for the fuller reception of the spirit of love, and rendered them powerful in doing God's work amongst men. The state of the Apostles and the blessing then received have an important message for the Christianity of our own and of every age. What a contrast the Christian Church—taking the word in its broadest sense as comprising all those who profess and call themselves Christians—presents at the close of the nineteenth when compared with the opening years of the first century. May not many of the problems and difficulties which the Church of to-day experiences be traced up to this woeful contrast? Behold England nowadays, with its two hundred sects, all calling themselves by the name of Christ; take the Christian world, with its Churches mutually hostile,

spending far more time and trouble on winning proselytes one from the other than upon winning souls from the darkness of heathenism;—surely this one fact alone, the natural result of our departure from the Pentecostal condition of unity and peace, is a sufficient evidence of our evil plight. We do not purpose now to go into any discussion of the causes whence have sprung the divisions of Christendom. "An enemy hath done this" is a quite sufficient explanation, for assuredly the great enemy of souls and of Christ has counterworked and traversed the work of the Church and the conversion of the world most effectually thereby. There are some persons who rejoice in the vast variety of divisions in the Church; but they are shortsighted and inexperienced in the danger and scandals which have flowed, and are flowing, from them. It is indeed in the mission field that the schisms among Christians are most evidently injurious. When the heathen see the soldiers of the Cross split up among themselves into hostile organizations, they very naturally say that it will be time enough when their own divergences and difficulties have been reconciled to come and convert persons who at least possess internal union and concord. The visible unity of the Church was from the earliest days a strong argument, breaking down pagan prejudice. Then, again, not only do the divisions of Christians place a stumbling-block in the way of the conversion of the heathen, but they lead to a wondrous waste of power both at home and abroad. Surely one cannot look at the religious state of a town or village in England without realizing at a glance the evil results of our divisions from this point of view. If men believe that the preaching of the Cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, and that millions are perishing

from want of that blessed story, can they feel contentment when the great work of competing sects consists, not in spreading that salvation, but in building up their own cause by proselytising from their neighbours, and gathering into their own organization persons who already have been made partakers of Christ Jesus? And if this competition of sects be injurious and wasteful within the bounds of Christendom, surely it is infinitely more so when various contending bodies concentrate all their forces, as they so often do, on the same locality in some unconverted land, and seem as eagerly desirous of gaining proselytes from one another as from the mass of paganism.

Then, too, to take it from another point of view, what a loss in generalship, in Christian strategy, in power of concentration, results from our unhappy divisions? The united efforts made by Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Greeks, are indeed all too small for the vast work of converting the heathen world if they were made with the greatest skill and wisdom. How much more insufficient they must be when a vast proportion of the power employed is wasted, as far as the work of conversion is concerned, because it is used simply in counteracting and withstanding the efforts of other Christian bodies. I say nothing as to the causes of dissensions. In many cases they may have been absolutely necessary, though in too many cases I fear they have resulted merely from views far too narrow and restrained; I merely point out the evil of division in itself as being, not a help, as some would consider it, but a terrible hindrance in the way of the Church of Christ. How different it was in the primitive Church! Within one hundred and fifty years, or little more, of the ascension of Jesus Christ

and the outpouring of the Divine Spirit, a Christian writer could boast that the Christian Church had permeated the whole Roman empire to such an extent that if the Christians abandoned the cities they would be turned into howling deserts. This triumphant march of Christianity was simply in accordance with the Saviour's promise. The world saw that Christians loved one another, and the world was consequently converted. But when primitive love cooled down, and divisions and sects in abundance sprang up after the conversion of Constantine the Great, then the progress of God's work gradually ceased, till at last Mahometanism arose to roll back the tide of triumphant success which had followed the preaching of the Cross, and to reduce beneath Satan's sway many a fair region, like North Africa, Egypt, and Asia Minor, which once had been strongholds of Christianity. Surely when one thinks of the manifold evils at home and abroad which the lack of the Pentecostal visible union and concord has caused, as well as of the myriads who still remain in darkness while nominal Christians bite and devour one another, we may well join in the glowing language of Jeremy Taylor's splendid prayer for the whole Catholic Church, as he cries, "O Holy Jesus, King of the saints and Prince of the Catholic Church, preserve Thy spouse whom Thou hast purchased with Thy right hand, and redeemed and cleansed with Thy blood. O preserve her safe from schism, heresy, and sacrilege. Unite all her members with the bands of faith, hope, and charity, and an external communion when it shall seem good in Thine eyes. Let the daily sacrifice of prayer and sacramental thanksgiving never cease, but be for ever presented to Thee, and for ever united to the intercession of her dearest Lord, and for ever

prevail for the obtaining for each of its members grace and blessing, pardon and salvation."[1]

II. Furthermore, we have brought before us the external manifestations or evidences of the interior gift of the Spirit really bestowed upon the Apostles at Pentecost. There was a sound as of a rushing mighty wind; there were tongues like as of fire, a separate and distinct tongue resting upon each disciple; and lastly there was the miraculous manifestation of speech in divers languages. Let us take these spiritual phenomena in order. First, then, "there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting;" a sign which was repeated in the scene narrated in the fourth chapter and the thirty-first verse, where we are told that "when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The appearances of things that were seen responded to the movements and powers that were unseen. It was a supernatural moment. The powers of a new life, the forces of a new kingdom, were coming into operation, and, as the result, manifestations that never since have been experienced found place among men. We can find a parallel to what then happened in scientific investigations. Geologists and astronomers push back the beginning of the world and of the universe at large to a vast distance, but they all acknowledge that there must have been a period when phenomena were manifested, powers and forces called into operation, of which men have now no experience. The beginning, or the repeated beginnings, of the various epochs must have been times of marvels,

[1] Prayer for all estates of men in the Holy Catholic Church, in Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, chap. iv., sec. vii.

which men can now only dream about. Pentecost was for the Christian with a sense of the awful importance of life and of time and of the individual soul a far greater beginning and a grander epoch than any mere material one. It was the beginning of the spiritual life, the inauguration of the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, the Lord and Ruler of the material universe; and therefore we ought to expect, or at least not to be surprised, that marvellous phenomena, signs and wonders even of a physical type, should accompany and celebrate the scene. The marvels of the story told in the first of Genesis find a parallel in the marvels told in the second of Acts. The one passage sets forth the foundation of the material universe, the other proclaims the nobler foundations of the spiritual universe. Let us take it again from another point of view. Pentecost was, in fact, Moses on Sinai or Elijah on Horeb over again, but in less terrific form. Moses and Elijah may be styled the founder and the refounder of the old dispensation, just as St. Peter and the Apostles may be called the founders of the new dispensation. But what a difference in the inaugural scene! No longer with thunder and earthquake, and mountains rent, but in keeping with a new and more peaceful economy, there came from heaven the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind. It is not, too, the only occasion where the idea of wind is connected with that of the Divine Spirit and its mysterious operations. How very similar, as the devout mind will trace, are the words and description of St. Luke, when narrating this first outpouring of the Spirit, to the words of the Divine Master repeated by St. John, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh,

and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

There appeared, too, tongues, separate and distinct, sitting upon each of them. The outward and visible sign manifested on this occasion was plainly typical of the new dispensation and of the chief means of its propagation. The personality of the Holy Ghost is essentially a doctrine of the new dispensation. The power and influence of God's Spirit is indeed often recognised in the Old Testament. Aholiab and Bezaleel are said to have been guided by the Spirit of God as they cunningly devised the fabric of the first tabernacle. The Spirit of Jehovah began to move Samson at times in the camp of Dan; and, on a later occasion, the same Spirit is described as descending upon him with such amazing force that he went down and slew thirty men of Ashkelon. These and many other similar passages present to us the Jewish conception of the Spirit of God and His work. He was a force, a power, quickening the human mind, illuminating with genius and equipping with physical strength those whom God chose to be champions of His people against the surrounding heathen. Aholiab's skill in mechanical operations, and Samson's strength, and Saul's prophesying, and David's musical art, were all of them the gifts of God. What a noble, what a grand, inspiring view of life and life's gifts and work, is there set before us. It is the old lesson taught by St. James, though so often forgotten by men when they draw a distinction between things sacred and things secular, "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of light." A deeper view, indeed, of the Divine Spirit and His work on the soul can be traced in the prophets, but then they were watchers upon

the mountains, who discerned from afar the approach of a nobler and a brighter day. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." That was Isaiah's statement of his work as adopted by our Lord; and now, at the very foundation of the Church, this deeper and nobler tone of thought concerning the Spirit is proclaimed, when there appeared tongues like as of fire sitting upon each of them.

The sign of the Holy Spirit's presence was a tongue of fire. It was a most suitable emblem, pregnant with meaning, and indicative of the large place which the human voice was to play in the work of the new dispensation, while the supernatural fire declared that the mere unaided human voice would avail nothing. The voice needs to be quickened and supported by that Divine fire, that superhuman energy and power, which the Holy Ghost alone can confer. The tongue of fire pointed on the Pentecostal morn to the important part in the Church's life, and in the propagation of the gospel, which prayer, and praise, and preaching would hereafter occupy. It would have been well, indeed, had the Church ever remembered what the Holy Ghost thus taught, specially concerning the propagation of the gospel, for it would have been thereby saved many a disgraceful page of history. The human tongue, illuminated and sanctified by fire from the inner sanctuary, was about to be the instrument of the gospel's advancement,—not penal laws, not the sword and fire of persecution; and so long as the divinely-appointed means were adhered to, so long the course of our holy religion was one long-continued triumph. But when the world and the devil were able to place in the hands of Christ's spouse their own weapons of violence and

force, when the Church forgot the words of her Master, "My kingdom is not of this world," and the teachings embodied in the symbol of the tongue of fire, then spiritual paralysis fell upon religious effort; and even where human law and power have compelled an external conformity to the Christian system, as they undoubtedly have done in some cases, yet all vital energy, all true godliness, have been there utterly lacking in the religion established by means so contrary to the mind of Christ. Very good men have made sad mistakes in this matter. Archbishop Ussher was a man whose deep piety equalled his prodigious learning, yet he maintained that the civil sword ought to be used to repress false doctrine; the divines of the Westminster Assembly have left their opinion on record, that it is the duty of the magistrate to use the sword on behalf of Christ's kingdom; Richard Baxter taught that the toleration of doctrines which he considered false was sinful; and all of them forgot the lesson of the day of Pentecost, that the tongue of fire was to be the only weapon permissible in the warfare of the kingdom whose rule is over spirits, not over bodies. The history of religion in England amply proves this. The Church of England enjoyed, about the middle of the last century, the greatest temporal prosperity. Her prelates held high estate, and her security was fenced round by a perfect bulwark of stringent laws. Yet her life-blood was fast ebbing away, and her true hold upon the nation was speedily relaxing. The very highest ranks of society, whom worldly policy attached nominally to her communion, had lost all faith in her supernatural work and commission. A modern historian has shown this right well in his description of the death-scene of Queen Caroline, a woman of eminent intellectual quali-

ties, who had played no small part in the religious life of this nation during the reign of her husband George II. Queen Caroline came to die, and was passing away surrounded by a crowd of attendants and courtiers. The whole Court, permeated by the spirit of earthliness which then prevailed, was disturbed by the death of the Queen's body, but no one seems to have thought of the Queen's soul, till some one mildly suggested that, for decency's sake, the Archbishop of Canterbury should be sent for that he might offer up prayer with the dying woman. Writing here in Ireland, I cannot forget that it was just the same with us at that very period. Religion was here upheld by worldly power; the Church, which should have been viewed as simply a spiritual power, was regarded and treated as a mere branch of the civil service, and true religion sank to its lowest depths. And we reaped in ourselves the due reward of our deeds. The very men whose voices were loudest in public for the repression of Romanism were privately living in grossest neglect of the offices and laws of religion and morality, because they in their hearts despised an institution which had forgotten the Pentecostal gift, and sought victory with the weapons of the flesh, and not with those of the spirit. May God for evermore protect His Church from such miserable mistakes, and lead her to depend more and more upon the power of the blessed and ever-present Pentecostal gift!

A separate and distinct tongue, too, sat upon each individual assembled in the upper room,—significant of the individual character of our holy religion. Christianity has a twofold aspect, neither of which can with impunity be neglected. Christianity has a corporate aspect. Our Lord Jesus Christ came not so much to

teach a new doctrine as to establish a new society, based on newer and higher principles, and working towards a higher and nobler end than any society ever previously founded. This side of Christianity was exaggerated in the Middle Ages. The Church, its unity, its interests, its welfare as a corporation, then dominated every other consideration. Since the Reformation, however, men have run to the other extreme. They have forgotten the social and corporate view of Christianity, and only thought of it as it deals with individuals. Men have looked at Christianity as it deals with the individual alone, and have forgotten and ignored the corporate side of its existence. Truth is many-sided indeed, and no side of truth can with impunity be neglected. Some have erred in dwelling too much on the corporate aspect of Christianity; others have erred in dwelling too much on its individual aspect. The New Testament alone combines both in due proportion, and teaches the importance and necessity of a Church, as against the extreme Protestant, on the one hand, who will reduce religion to a mere individual matter; and of a personal religion, an individual interest in the Spirit's presence, as here indicated by the tongues which sat upon each of them, as against the extreme Romanist, on the other hand, who looks upon the Church as everything, to the neglect of the life and progress of the individual. This passage does not at the same time lend any assistance to those who would thence conclude that there was no distinction between clergy and laity, and that no ministerial office was intended to exist under the dispensation of the kingdom of heaven. The Spirit, doubtless, was poured out upon all the disciples, and not upon the Twelve alone, upon the day of Pentecost, as also upon

the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius and his household. Yet this fact did not lead the Apostles and early Christians to conclude that an appointed and ordained ministry might be dispensed with. The Lord miraculously bestowed His graces and gifts at Pentecost and in the centurion's house at Cæsarea, because the gospel dispensation was opened on these occasions first of all to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. But when, subsequently to the formal opening, we read of the gifts of the Spirit, we find that their bestowal is connected with the ministry of the Apostles, of St. Peter and St. John at Samaria, or of St. Paul at Ephesus. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon all the company assembled in the upper room, or in the centurion's house; yet the Apostles saw nothing in this fact inconsistent with a ministerial organization, else they would not have set apart the seven men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost to minister to the widows at Jerusalem, nor would they have laid hands upon elders in every church which they founded, nor would St. Paul have written, "He that seeketh the office of a bishop desireth a good work," nor would St. Peter have exhorted the elders to a diligent oversight of the flock of God after the model of the Good Shepherd Himself. St. Peter clearly thought that the Pentecostal gifts did not obliterate the distinction which existed between the shepherds and the sheep, between a fixed and appointed ministry and the flock to whom they should minister, though in the very initial stages of the miraculous movement the Spirit was bestowed without any human agency upon men and women alike.[1]

[1] In the primitive Church the gift of preaching or prophesying seems to have been widely diffused and exercised among what we should call the laity, while at the same time a fixed and appointed ministry

III. Lastly, in this passage we find another external proof of the Spirit's presence in the miraculous gift of tongues. That gift indicated to the Apostles and to all ages the tongue as the instrument by which the gospel was to be propagated, as the symbol fire indicated the cleansing and purifying effects of the Spirit.[1] The gift of tongues is one that has ever excited much speculation, and specially so during the present century, when, as some will remember, an extraordinary attempt to revive them was made, some sixty years ago, by the followers of the celebrated Edward Irving. Devout students of Scripture have loved to trace in this incident at Pentecost, at the very foundation of the new dispensation, a reversal of that confusion of tongues which happened at Babel, and have seen in it the removal of "the covering cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations."[2] The precise character of the gift of tongues has of late years exer-

exercised the pastoral office, including therein the celebration of the sacraments and the exercise of Church discipline. This seems the explanation of the phenomena we behold in St. Paul's Epistles, in the manual called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and in that curious production of the primitive Church called the *Shepherd of Hermas*. But though preaching and prophesying were at first very freely exercised, the disorders which arose at Corinth and other places quickly taught the necessity for fixed rules. It was just the same in the synagogue. The ritual and worship was conducted by the officials. Preaching was free and open to all, but subject to the control and direction of the ruler of the Synagogue, as the case of St. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia proves (Acts xiii. 15).

[1] Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ*, Acts, chap. ii., ver. 3, notes that "there is a form of prayer in the Jewish writings which was used on the solemn fast of the ninth month Ab, one clause of which illustrates the Divine symbol, "Have mercy, O God, upon the city that mourneth, that is trodden down and desolate, because Thou didst lay it waste by fire, and by fire wilt build it up again."

[2] Isa. xxv. 7. See Lightfoot, *Horæ Heb.*, on Acts ii.

cised many minds, and different explanations have been offered of the phenomena. Some have viewed it as a miracle of hearing, not of speaking, and maintained that the Apostles did not speak different languages at all, but that they all spake the one Hebrew tongue, while the Jews of the various nationalities then assembled miraculously heard the gospel in their own language. The miracle is in that case intensified one hundredfold, while not one single difficulty which men feel is thereby alleviated. Meyer and a large number of German critics explain the speaking with tongues as mere ecstatic or rapturous utterances in the ordinary language of the disciples. Meyer thinks too that some foreign Jews had found their way into the band of the earliest disciples. They naturally delivered their ecstatic utterances, not in Aramaic, but in the foreign tongues to which they were accustomed, and legend then exaggerated this natural fact into the form which the Acts of the Apostles and the tradition of the Christian Church have ever since maintained.[1] It is, indeed, rather difficult to understand the estimate formed by such critics of the gift of tongues, whether bestowed on the day of Pentecost or during the subsequent ministrations of St. Paul at Corinth and Ephesus. Meyer is obliged to confess that there were some marvellous phenomena in Corinth and other places to which St. Paul bears witness. He describes himself as surpassing the whole Corinthian Church in this particular gift (1 Cor. xiv. 18), so that if St. Paul's testimony is to be relied upon,—and Meyer lays a great deal of weight upon it,—we must accept it as conclusively proving that there existed a power of speaking in

[1] Meyer on *Acts* (ii. 4), vol. i., pp. 67, 68. Clark's translation.

various languages among the first Christians. But the explanation offered by many critics of the gift of tongues as undoubtedly exercised at Corinth reduces it to something very like those fanatical exhibitions witnessed among the earliest followers of the Irvingite movement, or, to put it plainly, to a mere uttering of gibberish, unworthy of apostolic notice save in the language of sternest censure, as being a disorderly and foolish proceeding disgraceful to the Christian community.

Meyer's theory and that of many modern expositors seems, then, to me very unsatisfactory, raising up more difficulties than it solves. But it may be asked, what explanation do you offer of the Pentecostal miracle? and I can find no one more satisfactory than the old-fashioned one, that there was a real bestowal of tongues, a real gift of speaking in foreign languages, granted to the Apostles, to be used as occasion required when preaching the gospel in heathen lands. Dean Stanley, in his commentary on Corinthians, gives, as was his wont, a clear and attractive statement of the newer theory, putting in a vigorous shape the objections to the view here maintained. I know there are difficulties connected with this view, but many of these difficulties arise from our ignorance of the state and condition of the early Church, while others may spring from our very imperfect knowledge of the relations between mind and body. But whatever difficulties attend the explanation I offer, they are as nothing compared with the difficulties which attend the modern explanations to which I have referred.[1] What, then, is

[1] The speculations and discussions now rife concerning hypnotism ought to teach modesty of assertion as to what is or is not possible. On the 28th of March there appeared in an eminent medical authority,

our theory, which we call the old-fashioned one? It is simply this, that on the day of Pentecost Christ bestowed upon His Apostles the power of speaking in foreign languages, according to His promise reported by St. Mark (xvi. 17), "They shall speak with new tongues." This was the theory of the ancient Church. Irenæus speaks of the tongues as given "that all nations might be enabled to enter into life;" while

the *Lancet* newspaper, a review of a number of works on hypnotism, acknowledging the wonders of the subject, and containing this expression of opinion: "It is quite impossible to assign any limits to the influence of mind upon body, which is probably much more potent and far-reaching than we are usually prepared to admit." Now among the works reviewed in that article was one by Dr. Albert Moll of Berlin, published in the "Contemporary Science Series." That book makes statements about hypnotism which would quite cover Scripture miracles at which even devout people have stumbled, such as the miracles wrought by the shadow of St. Peter, or by handkerchiefs brought from the body of St. Paul (Acts v. 15, and xix. 12), which Meyer regards as mere legendary accretions to the genuine story. Moll, however, makes quite as wondrous statements about hypnotism. On page 1 he thus begins his *History of Hypnotism:* "In order to understand the gradual development of modern hypnotism from actual magnetism we must distinguish two points: firstly, that there are human beings who can exercise a personal influence over others, either by direct contact or even from a distance; and, secondly, the fact that particular psychical facts can be induced in human beings by certain physical processes. This second fact especially has long been known among the Oriental peoples, and was utilized by them for religious purposes. Kiesewetter attributes the early soothsaying by means of precious stones to hypnosis, which was induced by steadily gazing at the stones. This is also true of divination by looking into vessels and crystals, as the Egyptians have long been in the habit of doing, and has often been done in Europe: by Cagliostro, for example. These hypnotic phenomena are also found to have existed several thousand years ago among the Persian magi, as well as up to the present day among the Indian yogis and fakirs, who throw themselves into the hypnotic state by means of fixation of the gaze." The phenomena mentioned in the Acts, whether as to the tongues or to miracles worked through inanimate objects, may be compared with Moll's statements on pp. 5, 6, 84, and 362.

Origen explains that "St. Paul was made a debtor to different nations, because, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, he had received the gift of speaking in the languages of all nations." This has been the continuous theory of the Church as expressed in one of the most ancient portions of the Liturgy, the proper prefaces in the Communion office. The preface for Whit Sunday sets forth the facts commemorated on that day, as the other proper prefaces state the facts of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and Ascension. The fact which Whit Sunday celebrates, and for which special thanks are then offered, is this, that then "the Holy Ghost came down from heaven in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations."[1]

Now this traditional interpretation has not only the authority of the past on its side; we can also see many advantages which must have accrued from a gift of this character. The preface we have just cited states that the tongues were bestowed for the preaching of the gospel among all nations. And surely not merely as a striking sign to unbelievers, but also as a great practical help in missionary labours, such a gift of tongues would have been invaluable to the Church at its very birth. There was then neither time, nor money, nor organization to prepare men as missionaries of the Cross. An universal commission and work were given to twelve men, chiefly Galilean peasants,

[1] The proper preface in the Book of Common Prayer is longer and more minute than the corresponding one in the Missal. The Reformers extended the ancient form, inserting a special reference to the gift of tongues.

to go forth and found the Church. How could they have been fitted for this work unless God had bestowed upon them some such gift of speech? The vast diversity of tongues throughout the world is now one of the chief hindrances with which missionary effort has to contend. Years have often to elapse before any effective steps can be taken in the work of evangelisation, simply because the question of the languages bars the way. It would have been only in accordance with God's action in nature, where great epochs have been ever signalised by extraordinary phenomena, if such a great era-making epoch as the birth of the Church of Christ had been marked with extraordinary spiritual powers and developments, which supplied the want of that learning and those organizations which the Lord now leaves to the spiritual energies of the Church itself. But it is sometimes said, we never hear of this power as used by the Apostles for missionary purposes. Nothing, however, is a surer rule in historical investigations than this, "Never trust to mere silence," specially when the records are but few, scanty, fragmentary. We know but very little of the ways, worship, actions of the Apostles. Silence is no evidence either as to what they did or did not do. Some of them went into barbarous and distant lands, as history states. Eusebius (III., 1) tells us that St. Thomas received Parthia as his allotted region, while St. Andrew taught in Scythia. Eusebius is an author on whom great reliance is justly placed. He is one, too, whose accuracy and research have been again and again confirmed in our own day by discoveries of every kind. I see, then, no reason why we should not depend upon him upon this point as well as upon others. Now if the Apostles taught in Scythia and Parthia, what an

enormous advantage it must have given them in their work among a strange and barbarous people if, by means of the Pentecostal blessing, they could at once proclaim a crucified Saviour. It is sometimes said, however, the gift of speaking with foreign languages was not required by the Apostles for missionary purposes, as Greek alone would carry a man all through the world, and Greek the Apostles evidently knew. But people in saying so forget that there is a great difference between possessing enough of a language to travel over the world, and speaking with such facility as enables one to preach. English will now carry a man over the world, but English will not enable him to preach to the people of India or of China. Greek might carry Apostles all over the Roman Empire, and might enable St. Thomas to be understood by the courtiers of the great kings of Parthia, where traces of the ancient Greek language and civilization, derived from Alexander's time, long prevailed. But Greek would not enable a primitive Christian teacher to preach fluently among the Celts of Galatia, or of Britain, or among the natives of Spain or of Phrygia, or the barbarians of Scythia.[1] We

[1] It is a completely mistaken notion, which no one would cherish who had read history with a full-orbed mental eye, realizing the past with its circumstances, that Latin and Greek superseded all other languages throughout the empire. Local dialects and languages continued to flourish all the time, save amongst the official classes. Else how did Welsh survive to this day in England? How did Celtic survive in France side by side with Latin? The two celebrated cases of Gregory of Tours and of St. Patrick show that their Latin was of a very rude and corrupt kind; their real spoken language was Celtic, the tongue of the mass of the people. In a learned work just published I note a confirmation of this view. Professor Ramsay, in his *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 24, avows how his mind has changed on this question in regard to Asia Minor. "Romans governed Asia Minor, because with their marvellous governing talent they knew how to adapt

see from St. Paul's case how powerful was the hold which the Aramaic language had over the people of Jerusalem. When the excited mob heard St. Paul speak in the Hebrew tongue they listened patiently, because their national feelings, the sentiments which sprang up in childhood and were allied with their noblest hopes, were touched. So must it have been all the world over. The Pentecostal gift of tongues was a powerful help in preaching the gospel, because, like the Master's promise to assist their minds and their tongues in the hour of need, it freed the Apostles from care, anxiety, and difficulties, which would have sorely hindered their great work. But while I offer this explanation, I acknowledge that it has its own difficulties; but then every theory has its difficulties, and we can only balance difficulties against difficulties, selecting that theory which seems to have the fewest. The conduct, for instance, of the Corinthians, who seem to have used the gift of tongues simply to minister to the spirit of display, not to edification or to missionary work, seems to some a great difficulty. But after all is not their conduct simply an instance of human sin,

their administration to the people of the plateau. It is true that the great cities (of Asia Minor) put on a Western appearance, and took Latin or Greek names. Latin and Greek were the languages of government, of the educated classes, and of polite society. Only this superficial aspect is attested in literature and in ordinary history, and when I began to travel the thought had never occurred to me that there was any other. The conviction has gradually forced itself on me that the real state of the country was very different. Greek was not the popular language of the plateau, even in the third century after Christ; the mass of the people spoke Lycaonian, and Galatian, and Phrygian, although those who wrote books wrote Greek, and those who governed spoke Latin." See again pp. 98, 99 for much more on the same subject, showing the prevalence of the native languages of Asia Minor down to the year A.D. 500.

perverting and misusing a divine gift, such as we often see still? God still bestows His gifts, the real outcome and work of the Spirit. Man takes them, treats them as his own, and misuses them for his own purposes of sin and selfishness. What else did the Corinthians do, save that the gift which they abused was an exceptional one; but then their circumstances, times, opportunities, punishments, all were exceptional and peculiar. The one thing that was not peculiar was this, the abiding tendency of human nature to degrade Divine gifts and blessings. There must, we again repeat, be difficulties and mystery connected with this subject, no matter what view we take. Perhaps, too, we are no fitting judges of the gifts bestowed on the primitive Church, or the phenomena manifested under such extraordinary circumstances, when everything, every power, every force, every organization, was arrayed against the company of the twelve Apostles. Surely miracles and miraculous powers seem absolutely necessary and natural in such a case.[1] We are not now sufficient or capable judges of events as they then existed. Perhaps, too, we are not sufficient judges because we do not possess that spirit which would make us to sympathise with and understand the state of the Church at that time. "They were all

[1] Christians often give their sceptical opponents an advantage over them by allowing them to state the difficulties of Christianity and never retorting the difficulties of scepticism. There is no historical fact of the distant past that cannot be encumbered with numerous difficulties, deduced, in most cases, from our own ignorance. No difficulty on our side is so great as that which the sceptic has to meet in undertaking to explain, on purely natural grounds, the rise and success of Christianity on the very spot and at the very time its Author had been crucified. The Christian story is simple and natural; the sceptical explanation forced, unnatural, and surrounded by a thousand appalling difficulties.

together in one place." The Church was then visibly united, and internally united too. A nineteenth century Christian, with the endless divisions of Christendom, is scarcely the most fitting judge of the Church and the Church's blessings when the Spirit of the Master pervaded it and the prayer of the Master for visible unity was fulfilled in it. Christendom is weak now from its manifold divisions. Even in a mere natural way, and from a mere human point of view, we can see how its divisions destroy its power and efficacy as Christ's witness in the world. But when we take the matter from a spiritual point of view, we cannot even guess what marvellous gifts and endowments, needful for the edification of His people and the conversion of the world, we now lack from want of the Divine charity and peace which ruled the hearts of the twelve as they assembled in the upper room that Pentecostal morn. We shall better understand primitive gifts when we get back primitive union.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. PETER'S FIRST SERMON.

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words."—ACTS ii. 14.

THIS verse contains the opening words of St. Peter's address to the multitude who were roused to wonder and inquiry by the miraculous manifestations of Pentecost. That address is full of interest when viewed aright, freed from all the haze which the long familiarity of ages has brought with it. In this second chapter we have the report of a sermon preached within a few days of Christ's ascension, addressed to men many of whom knew Jesus Christ, all of whom had heard of His work, His life, and His death, and setting forth the apostolic estimate of Christ, His miracles, His teaching, His ascended condition and glory. We cannot realize, unless by an intellectual effort, the special worth of these apostolic reports contained in the Acts. Men are sometimes sceptical about them, asking, how did we get them at all? how were they handed down? This is, however, an easier question to answer than some think. If we take, for instance, this Pentecostal address alone, we know that St. Luke had many opportunities of personal communication with St. Peter. He may have learned from St. Peter's

own mouth what he said on this occasion, and he could compare this verbal report with the impressions and remembrances of hundreds who then were present. But there is another solution of the difficulty less known to the ordinary student of Holy Scripture. The ancients made a great use of shorthand, and were quite well accustomed to take down spoken discourses, transmitting them thus to future ages. Shorthand was, in fact, much more commonly used among the ancients than among ourselves. The younger Pliny, for instance, who was a contemporary of the Apostles, never travelled without a shorthand writer, whose business it was to transcribe passages which struck his master in the books he was perpetually studying. The sermons of Chrysostom were all extemporaneous effusions. In fact, the golden-mouthed patriarch of Constantinople was such an indefatigable pulpit-orator, preaching almost daily, that it would have been impossible to have made any copious preparation. The extensive reports of his sermons which have come down to us, the volumes of his expositions on the books of Scripture which we possess, prove that shorthand must have been constantly used by his hearers.[1] Now what would

[1] I read the other day the report of an eminent Unitarian divine who was lecturing upon the Gospels. He was upholding the view that it was impossible that reports of the discourses of Christ and of His Apostles could have been handed down in anything like their shape as given in the New Testament, because it was an age without shorthand. The lecturer is an eminent metaphysical and philosophical critic, but he is evidently not versed in the social life of the ancients. Had the lecturer but referred to Prof. J. E. B. Mayor's edition of Pliny's *Letters*, Book iii., p. 96, he would have found abundant references proving that shorthand was a usual accomplishment among educated men long prior to the Christian era.

we give for a few shorthand reports of sermons by Clement of Rome, by St. Luke, by Timothy, by Apollos, preached in Rome, Alexandria, or Antioch? Suppose they were discovered, like the numerous Egyptian manuscripts which have of late years come to light, deposited in the desert sands, and were found to set forth the miracles, the ministry, and the person of Christ exactly as now we preach them, what a marvellous confirmation of the faith we should esteem them! And yet what should we then possess more than we already have in the sermons and discourses of St. Peter and St. Paul, reported by an eye and ear-witness who wrote the Acts of the Apostles?

I. The congregation assembled to listen to this first Gospel discourse preached by a human agent was a notable and representative one. There were Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judæa,—or, as an ancient expositor (Tertullian) puts it, in Armenia[1] and Cappadocia,—in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. The enumeration of the various nationalities listening to St. Peter begins from the extremest east; it proceeds then to the north, from thence to the south, terminating with Rome, which represents the west. They were all Jews or Jewish proselytes, showing how extremely wide, at the epoch of the Incarnation, was the dispersion of God's ancient people. St. Paul, in one profound passage of the Epistle to the Galatians, notes that "God sent forth His Son in the fulness of time," that is, at the exact moment when the world was prepared for the advent of the truth. This "fulness of time" may

[1] Tertullian, *Against the Jews*, chap. vii.

be noted in many directions. Roman roads, Roman law, commerce, and civilization opened channels of communication which bore the tidings of the gospel into every land. A sweet singer of our own time, the late Sir Samuel Ferguson, has depicted in his *Lays of the Western Gael* this diffusion of the gospel through the military organization of Rome. He represents a Celt from Ireland as present at the crucifixion. This may seem at first somewhat improbable, as Ireland was never included within the bounds of the Roman Empire; and yet the poet's song can be justified from history. Though never included formally within the Empire, Irishmen and Scotch Highlanders must often have served in the ranks of the Roman army, just as at the present day, and especially in India, men of foreign nationalities are often found serving in the ranks of the British army. In later times Irishmen most certainly formed a Roman legion all to themselves. St. Jerome tells us [1] that he had seen them acting in that capacity at Treves, in Germany. They were noted for their bravery, which, as Jerome believes, they sustained by consuming human flesh. Three hundred years earlier Irishmen may often have enlisted in the service of those British legions which the Romans withdrew from Britain and located in the East; and thus Sir Samuel Ferguson does not pass the bounds of historic credibility when he represents a certain centurion, who had been present at the crucifixion, as returning to his native land, and there proclaiming the tidings of our Lord's atoning sacrifice:—

"And they say, Centurion Altus, when he to Emania came,
And to Rome's subjection called us, urging Cæsar's tribute claim,

[1] *Adv. Jovin.*, lib. ii., cap. 7, in Migne's *Pat. Lat.*, t. xxiii., col. 296

Told that half the world barbarian thrills already with the faith,
Taught them by the God-like Syrian, Cæsar lately put to death." [1]

The dispersion of the Jews throughout not only the Roman Empire, but far beyond its limits, served the same end, and hastened the fulness of time needed for the Messiah's appearance. We must remember, however, that the long list of varied nationalities present at this Pentecostal feast were not Gentiles, they were Jews of the dispersion scattered broadcast among the nations as far as Central Asia towards the east, as far as southern Arabia and Aden on the south, and Spain and Britain on the west. The course of modern investigation and discovery amply confirms the statement of this passage, as well as the similar statement of the eighth chapter, which represents a Jewish statesman of Abyssinia or Ethiopia as coming up to Jerusalem for the purposes of devotion. Jewish inscriptions have been found in Aden dating back long before the Christian era. A Jewish colony existed ages before Christ in the region of Southern Arabia, and continued to flourish there down to the Middle Ages.[2] At Rome, Alexandria,

[1] I have worked out this point at some length in *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, chap. i., pp. 14-20.

[2] The history of the Jewish settlement in the south of Arabia is very little known by the average student of the Acts, and yet it is a wonderful confirmation of its accuracy both here and in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch. This colony existed in Arabia long before the Christian era. They claimed, indeed, to have been a portion of the Jews of the Captivity. They established an independent kingdom in Southern Arabia, which bitterly persecuted the Christians about the year 500. A full account of this little-known persecution, and of the Homerite martyrs who suffered in it, will be found by those curious in such matters in that great monumental work the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, vols. x. and xii. for October, under the names of St. Arethas and St. Elesbaan. Large quantities of manuscripts about this Jewish colony were discovered some years ago in the mosques of

and Greece the Jews at this period constituted an important factor in the total population.[1] The dispersion of the Jews had now done its work, and brought with it the fulness of time required by the Divine purposes. The way of the Messiah had been effectually prepared by it. The Divine seed fell upon no unploughed and unbroken soil. Pure and noble ideas of worship and morality had been scattered broadcast throughout the world. Some years ago the Judgment of Solomon was found depicted on the ceiling of a Pompeian house, witnessing to the spread of scriptural knowledge through Jewish artists in the time of Tiberius and of Nero. A race of missionaries, too, equipped for their work, was developed through the discipline of exile. The thousands who hung upon Peter's lips needed nothing but instruction in the faith of Jesus Christ, together with the baptism of the Spirit, and the finest, the most enthusiastic, and the most cosmopolitan of agencies lay ready to the Church's hand. While, again, the organization of synagogues, which the exigencies of the dispersion had called into existence, was just the one suited to the various purposes of charity, worship, and teaching, which the Christian Church required. Whether, indeed, we consider the persons whom St. Peter addressed, or the machinery they had elaborated, or the diffusion of pure religious ideas they

Southern Arabia. A considerable number of Jews still find a place there. See, for an account of the Jewish kingdom n Arabia, an article on Elesbaan, in vol. ii. of the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*. Gibbon in his forty-second and fiftieth chapters has much about it.

[1] The Jewish cemeteries discovered at Rome date back to the time of our Lord, or even before it. They were the models on which the Christians made the catacombs. The symbols of Judaism appear in the Christian tombs. See Northcote's *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, and Brownlow and Northcote's *Roma Sotteranea*.

had occasioned, we see in this passage a splendid illustration of the care and working of Divine Providence bringing good out of evil and real victory out of apparent defeat. Prophet and psalmist had lamented over Zion's ruin and Israel's exile into foreign lands, but they saw not how that God was thereby working out His own purposes of wider blessing to mankind at large, fitting Jews and Gentiles alike for that fulness of time when the Eternal Son should be manifested.

II. The brave, outspoken tone of this sermon evidences the power and influence of the Holy Spirit upon St. Peter's mind. St. Chrysostom, in his famous lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, notes the courageous tone of this address as a clear evidence of the truth of the resurrection. This argument has been ever since a commonplace with apologists and expositors, and yet it is only by an effort that we can realize how very strong it is. Here was St. Peter and his fellow Apostles standing up proclaiming a glorified and ascended Messiah. Just seven weeks before, they had fled from the messengers of the High Priest sent to arrest their Master, leaving Him to His fate. They had seen Him crucified, knew of His burial, and then, feeling utterly defeated, had as much as possible withdrawn themselves from public notice. Seven weeks after, the same band, led by St. Peter, himself a short time before afraid to confess Christ to a maidservant, boldly stand up, charge upon the multitude, who knew all the circumstances of Christ's execution, the crime of having thus killed the Prince of Life, and appeal to the supernatural evidence of the gift of tongues, to which they had just listened, as the best proof of the truth of their message. St. Peter's courage on this occasion is one of the clearest proofs of the truth of his testimony. St. Peter was not naturally a courageous

man. He was very impulsive and very sympathetic. He was the creature of his surroundings. If he found himself in the midst of Christ's friends, he was the most forward to uphold Christ's cause, but he had not much moarl stamina. He was sadly deficient in staying power. His mind was very Celtic in its tone, to draw an illustration from national characteristics. The Celtic mind is very sympathetic, ardent, enthusiastic. It is swept along in moments of excitement, either of victory or of defeat, by the dominating power of numbers. How often has this quality been manifested by the French people, for instance? They are resistless when victorious; they collapse utterly and at once when defeated. St. Peter was just the same. He was sympathetic, ardent, enthusiastic, and fell, in later as well as in earlier age, into the perils which attend such temperaments. He denied his Master when surrounded by the menials of the high priest. He was ready to die for that Master a few hours before, when sitting surrounded by Christ's disciples in the secrecy of the upper room. Divine grace and the baptism of the Spirit did not at all change his natural character in this respect. Divine grace, whether granted in ancient or in modern times, does not destroy natural character, which is God's gift to man. It merely refines, purifies, elevates it. We find, indeed, a striking illustration of this law of the Divine life in St. Peter's case.

One of the most convincing proofs of the truth of the New Testament is the identity of character we behold in the representations given of St. Peter by writers who produced their books quite independently of each other. St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians long prior to any of the Gospel narratives. Yet St. Paul's picture

of St. Peter in the Epistle to the Galatians is exactly the same as that drawn by the four Evangelists alike. St. Paul depicts him as the same intensely sympathetic, and therefore the same unstable person whom the Evangelists describe. The brave scene in the upper chamber, and the scene of cowardice and disgrace in the high priest's palace, were in principle re-enacted twenty years after, about the year A.D. 53, at Antioch. St. Peter was very bold in maintaining the right of Gentile freedom, and hesitated not to live like the Gentile Christians of Antioch, so long as none of the strict Jewish Christians of Jerusalem knew about it St. Peter wished, in fact, to stand well with both parties, and therefore strove to conciliate both. He was, for the time, a type of that famous character Mr. Facing-two-ways. He lived, therefore, as a Gentile, until some of the Jerusalem brethren arrived at Antioch, when he at once quailed before them and retreated, betraying the cause of Christian freedom, and sacrificing, just as men do still, Christian principle and honesty upon the altar of self-seeking popularity. St. Peter, we therefore maintain, always remained at heart the same character. He was bold and forward for Christ so long as all went well, because he was intensely sympathetic; but he had very little of that power of standing alone which marked St. Paul, and nerved him, even though a solitary witness, when the cause of truth was involved. This somewhat lengthened argument is absolutely necessary to show the strength of our conclusion: that it must have been an overpowering sense of the awful reality of Christ's resurrection and ascension which alone could have overcome this natural weakness of St. Peter, and make him on the day of Pentecost as brave in proclaiming Jesus Christ to his

red-handed murderers as he was bold to propose a new Apostle in place of the hapless traitor to the assembled disciples in the upper chamber. St. Peter evidently believed, and believed with an intense, overwhelming, resistless conviction, in the truth of Christ's resurrection and ascension, which thus became to him the source of personal courage and of individual power.

III. Again, the tone of St. Peter's sermon was remarkable because of its enlarged and enlightened spirituality. It proved the Spirit's power in illuminating the human consciousness. St. Peter was rapidly gaining a true conception of the nature of the kingdom of God. He enunciates that conception in this sermon. He proclaims Christianity, in its catholic and universal aspect, when he quotes the prophet Joel as predicting the time when the Lord would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. St. Peter does not indeed seem to have realized all at once the full significance of his own teaching. He did not see that his words applied to the Gentiles equally with the Jews, sounding the death-knell of all national exclusiveness in religion. Had he seen the full meaning of his own words, he would not have hesitated so much about the baptism of Cornelius and the admission of the Gentiles. It has been found true, not only of St. Peter, but of teachers, reformers, politicians, statesmen, that they have not at once recognised all the vast issues and undeveloped principles which lay wrapped up in their original message. The stress and trial of life alone draw them out, at times compelling their authors to regret their earlier actions, at other times leading them to follow out with intensified vigour the principles and movements which they had themselves set in operation. Luther, when he protested against indulgences; Erasmus, when he ridi-

culed the ignorance of the monks and advocated the study of the Greek New Testament; John Hampden, when he refused to pay ship money; or Bishop Ken, when he declined obedience to the orders of King James II.;—none of them saw whereunto their principles would necessarily grow till time had thoroughly threshed their teaching and their actions, separating the husk of external circumstances, which are so variable, from the kernel of principle, which is eternally the same, stern, severe, inexorable, in its operations. So it was with St. Peter, and still earlier with the prophets. They sang of and preached a universal religion, as in this passage, but yet none of them realized the full scope and meaning of the words they had used, till a special revelation upon the housetop at Joppa compelled St. Peter to grasp and understand and apply the principles he had been already proclaiming.

In this respect, indeed, we recognise the greatness, the divinity of the Master Himself towering above the noblest of His followers; above even Peter himself, upon whom He pronounced such an eulogium, and bestowed such privileges. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught this universality of Christianity, and expressly recognised it. St. Peter indeed taught it in this sermon, but he did not recognise the force of his own words. Jesus Christ not only taught it, but realized the meaning of His teaching. It was indeed no part of Christ's earthly ministry to preach to the Gentiles. He came to the house of Israel alone. Yet how clearly He witnesses, how distinctly He prophesies of the future universality of His kingdom. He heals a centurion's servant, proclaiming at the same time that many shall come from the east and west, and sit down in the kingdom, while the children of the kingdom shall be

cast out. He risks His life among the inhabitants of the city where He had been brought up, in order that He may deliver this truth. He repeats it to the woman of Samaria, in order that He may chase away her national superstition. He embodies it in His great eucharistic prayer for His Apostles and for His Church at large. The more carefully and the more devoutly we study Christ's words, the more lofty will be our conception of His personality and character, who from the very beginning recognised the full force of His message, the true extent of that Divine society He was about to establish. The avowed catholicity of Christ's teaching is one of the surest proofs of Christ's divinity. He had not to wait as Peter waited, till events explained the meaning of His words; from the beginning He knew all things which should happen.

Still the tone of St. Peter's sermon proved that the Spirit had supernaturally enlightened him. He had already risen to spiritual heights undreamt-of hitherto, even by himself. A comparison of a few passages proves this. In the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew we have narrated for us the scene where our Lord extracts from St. Peter his celebrated confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and then soon after bestows upon him the equally celebrated rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan! thou art a stumblingblock unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." St. Peter, with his horror-struck opposition to the very idea of Christ's death and suffering, evidently cherished the same notions of the kingdom of God, which Christ had come to establish, as James and John did when they petitioned for the highest place in the Master's kingdom. This carnal conception of a temporal kingdom and earthly forces and

human weapons St. Peter retained when he armed himself with a sword and prepared to defend his Master in the Garden of Gethsemane; and even later still when, after the resurrection, the Apostles, acting doubtless through Peter as their spokesman, demanded, "Dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" But the Spirit was vouchsafed, and new power, of which the Master had spoken, was granted, and that power raised Peter above all such low Jewish ideas, and the kingdom announced to the Jews is no longer a kingdom of earth, with its carnal weapons and its dignities. He now understood what the Master had taught when He witnessed before Pontius Pilate His good confession, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence." The carnal conception passes away under the influence of the heavenly solvent, and St. Peter proclaimed a kingdom which was a purely spiritual dominion, dealing with remission of sins and a purified interior life, through the operation and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The power of the Holy Ghost was shown in St. Peter's case by the vast and complete change which passed at once over his spiritual ideas and outlook. The thoughts and expectations of the pious Jews of Galilee—the very class from whom St. Peter sprang—were just then shaped and formed by the popular apocalyptic literature of the period, as we have already pointed out in the second lecture. The Second Epistle of St. Peter and the Epistle of Jude prove that the Galileans of that time were careful students of works like the Assumption of Moses, the Book of Enoch, and the Ascension of Isaiah, which agree in representing the kingdom of God and

the reign of the Messiah as equivalent to the triumph of the Jewish nation over all foreign dominion and bondage. St. Peter and the other eleven Apostles shared these natural ideas and expectations till the Spirit was poured out, when they learned in a profounder spiritual comprehension to estimate aright the scope and meaning of our blessed Lord's teaching. St. Peter dwells, therefore, in his sermon on Christ's person, His sufferings, His resurrection, His ascension, no longer indeed for the purpose of exalting the Jewish nation, or predicting its triumph, but to point a purely spiritual lesson. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive"—not honour, riches, temporal freedom, but "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The subject-matter of St. Peter's sermon, the change in his tone of teaching, is another great proof of a supernatural force and power imparted on the Day of Pentecost.

IV. Let us look somewhat farther into the matter of this earliest Christian sermon, that we may learn the apostolic view of the Christian scheme. Some persons have asserted that the earliest Christians were Ebionites,[1] and taught a system of doctrine akin to modern Unitarianism. This theory can best be tested by an appeal to the Acts of the Apostles. What, for

[1] The term Ebionite is thus well explained by the Rev. J. M. Fuller in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. ii., p. 25: "The term Ebionism expresses conveniently the opinions and practices of the descendants of the Judaizers of the apostolic age, and is very little removed from Judaism. Judaism was for them not so much a preparation for Christianity as an institution eternally good in itself, and but slightly modified in Christianity. Whatever merit Christianity possessed, was possessed as the continuation and supplement of Judaism. The divinity of the old covenant was the only valid guarantee for the truth of the new.

instance, was the conception of Christ's life, work, and ascended state, which St. Peter presented to the astonished multitude? We must not expect, indeed, to find in this sermon a formulated and scientific system of Christian doctrine. St. Peter was as yet far too near the great events he declared, far too close to the superhuman personality of Christ, to co-ordinate his ideas and arrange his views. It is a matter of every-day experience that when a new discovery is suddenly made, when a new revelation takes place in the region of nature, men do not grasp at once all the new relations thereby involved, all the novel applications whereof it is capable. The human mind is so limited in its power that it is not till we get some distance away from a great object that we are enabled to survey it in the fulness of its outline. Inspiration assisted St. Peter, elevated his mind, raised his tone of thought to a higher level, but it did not reverse this fundamental law under which the human mind works. Yet St. Peter's discourse contains all the great principles of Catholic Christianity as opposed to that low view which would represent the earliest Christians as preaching the purely humanitarian scheme of modern Unitarianism. St. Peter taught boldly the miraculous element of Christ's life, describing Him as "a man approved of God by mighty works and wonders and

Hence the tendency of this class of Ebionites to exalt the old at the expense of the new, to magnify Moses and the prophets, and to allow Jesus Christ to be 'nothing more than a Solomon or a Jonas' (Tertull., *De Carne Christi*, c. 18); 'Legal righteousness was to them the highest type of perfection; the earthly Jerusalem, in spite of its destruction, was an object of adoration, as if it were the House of God' (Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i., 26); its restoration would take place in the millennial kingdom of Messiah, and the Jews would return there as the manifested chosen people of God."

signs which God did by Him." Yet he did not dwell as much as we might have expected upon the miraculous side of Christ's ministry. In fact, the earliest heralds of the Cross did not make as much use of the argument from miracles as we might have expected them to have done. And that for a very simple reason. The inhabitants of the East were so accustomed to the practices of magic that they simply classed the Christian missionaries with magicians. The Jewish explanation of the miracles of our Lord is of this description. The Talmudists do not deny that He worked miracles, but assert that He achieved them by a special use of the Tetragammaton, or the sacred name of Jehovah, which was known only to Himself. The sacred writers and preachers refer, therefore, again and again to the miracles of our Saviour, as St. Peter does in the second chapter, as well-known and admitted facts, whatever explanation may be offered of them, and then turn to other aspects of the question. The Apostles had, however, a more powerful argument in reserve. They preached a spiritual religion, a present peace with God, a present forgiveness of sins; they point forward to a future life of which even here below believers possess the earnest and the pledge. We, with our minds steeped in ages of Christian thought and teaching, can have no idea of the convincing self-evidencing force of teaching like that, to a Jew reared up in a system of barren formalism, and still more to a Gentile, with spiritual instincts longing for satisfaction, and which he was expected to satisfy with the bloodstained shows of the amphitheatre or with the immoralities and impure banquetings of the pagan temples. To persons in that condition, an argument derived from a mere wonderful work brought little conviction, for they were well

accustomed to behold very marvellous and apparently miraculous actions, such as to this day the wandering jugglers of India exhibit.[1] But when they beheld lives transfused by the love of God, and heard pure spiritual teaching such as responded to the profoundest depths of their own hearts, then deep answered unto deep. The preaching of the Cross became indeed the power of God unto salvation, because the human soul instinctively felt that the Cross was the medicine fittest for its spiritual maladies.

V. Again, this sermon shows the method of interpreting the Psalms and Prophets popular among the pious Jews of St. Peter's time. St. Peter's method of interpretation is identical with that of our Lord, of St. Paul, and of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He beholds in the Psalms hints and types of the profoundest doctrines of the Creed. We can see this in both the quotations which he makes. St. Peter finds in the sixteenth Psalm a prophecy of the intermediate state of souls and of the resurrection of our Lord. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades" is a text which has furnished the basis of the article in the Apostles' Creed which teaches that Christ descended into hell. It is a pity indeed that the translation which the last revisers have adopted, "Hades" instead of "Hell," was not used in the English translation of the Apostles' Creed; for the ordinary reading has misled many a thoughtful and serious soul, as if the Creed taught that the pure and sinless spirit of the Saviour had been made partaker of the horrors of eternal misery. Whereas, in truth, the doctrine of Scripture and of the Creed alike merely asserts that our Lord's

[1] See Moll's *Hypnotism*, p. 216, in the "Contemporary Science Series."

spirit, when separated from the body, entered and thereby sanctified and prepared the place or state where Christian souls, while separated from their bodies, await the general resurrection of the just and the completion of their happiness. The doctrine of the intermediate state, as taught by Bishop Pearson and other great divines, is primarily based on two texts, the passage before us and the words of our Saviour to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). This doctrine accurately corresponds with the catholic doctrine of our Lord's Person. The Arian heresy denied the true deity of our Lord. The second great heresy was the Apollinarian, which denied His true and perfect humanity. The orthodox doctrine taught the tripartite nature of man, that is, that there was in man, first, a body, secondly, the animal soul which man possesses in common with the beasts, and which perishes at death, and, lastly, the human spirit which is immortal and by which he maintains communion with God. Now the Apollinarian heresy asserted that Jesus Christ possessed a body and a soul, but denied His possession of a spirit. Its theory was that the Divine nature took the place of a true human spirit in Christ, so that Christ was unlike His brethren in this respect, that when the body died, and the animal soul perished, He had no human spirit by which He might enter into Hades, or dwell in Paradise. The Divine nature was the only portion of the Incarnate Lord which then survived. Against this view the words of St. Peter testified beforehand, teaching, by his adaptation of David's prophecy, that our Lord possessed the fulness of humanity in its threefold division, whereby He was enabled to share the experience and lot of His brethren,

not only in this life, but also in the intermediate state of Hades, wherein the spirits of the blessed dead await re-union with their bodies, and expect in hope the second advent of their Lord.[1]

St. Peter's interpretation again of the Psalms recognised in David's words a prophecy of the resurrection: "Neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption,"—a rendering of the New Testament revisers which, however literal, is not nearly as vigorous or suggestive as the old translation, "Neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption." St. Peter then proceeds to point out how impossible it was that this prediction could have been fulfilled in David. David's flesh undoubtedly did see corruption, because every one knew where his tomb was. St. Peter's speech here touches upon a point where we can confirm his accuracy out of ancient historians. David was buried, according to ancient writers, in the city of David (2 Kings ii. 10). The Rabbis went even further, they determined the time of his death. According to a writer quoted by that great seventeenth-century teacher, Dr. John Lightfoot,[2] "David died at Pentecost, and all Israel bewailed him, and offered their sacrifices the day following." After the return from Babylon the site of the sepulchre was known, as Neh. iii. 16 reports, telling us that Nehemiah the son of Azbuk repaired the wall over against the sepulchre of David; while still later Josephus[3] tells us that Hyrcanus, the high priest, and Herod the Great opened David's tomb, and removed vast treasures from it. St. Peter's words on this occasion possess an

[1] See the article on "Apollinaris the Younger" in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. i., for a concise account of the Apollinarian heresy.

[2] *Horæ Hebraicæ* on Acts ii. 29.

[3] See Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XIII., viii., 4; XVI., vii., 1; *Wars*, I., ii., 5.

important evidential aspect, and suggest one of the gravest difficulties which the assailants of the resurrection have to face. St. Peter appealed to the evidence of David's tomb as demonstrating the fact that he was dead, and that death still held him in its power. Why did not his opponents appeal to the testimony of Christ's tomb? It is evident from St. Peter's argument that Christ's tomb was empty, and was known to be empty. The first witnesses to the resurrection insisted, within a few weeks of our Lord's crucifixion, upon this fact; proclaimed it everywhere, and the Jews made no attempt to dispute their assertions. Our opponents may indeed say, we acknowledge the fact of the emptiness of the tomb, but the body of Christ was removed by St. Peter and his associates. How then, we reply, do you account for St. Peter's action? Did conscious guilt and hypocrisy make him brave and enthusiastic? If they say, indeed, Peter did not remove the body, but that his associates did, then how are we to account for the conversations St. Peter thought he had held with his risen Master, the appearances vouchsafed to him, the close converse, "eating and drinking with him after He was risen from the dead"? St. Peter, by his appeal to David's tomb, and its bearing on the sixteenth Psalm, proves that he believed in no ideal resurrection, no phantasm,—no ghost story, to put it plainly; but that he taught the doctrine of the resurrection as the Church now accepts it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRSTFRUITS OF PENTECOST.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him."—ACTS ii. 37-39.

THE sermon of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost and the sermon of our Lord present a striking contrast. Our Lord's sermons were of various kinds; they were at times consoling, yet full of instruction and direction. Such, for instance, was the Sermon on the Mount. At other times His discourses were stern, and full of sharp reproof. Such was His teaching in His parting addresses to the Jews delivered in the temple, recorded in the synoptic Gospels. Yet they apparently failed, for the time at least, in producing any great practical results. In fact, His temple discourses served only to irritate His foes, and arouse their hostility.

St. Peter delivered a sermon on the day of Pentecost which was quite as stern and quite as calculated to irritate, and yet that discourse was crowned with results exceeding those ever achieved by our Lord, though His discourses far surpassed St. Peter's in literary skill, in spiritual meaning, in eternal signifi-

cance and value. Whence came this fact? It simply happened in fulfilment of Christ's own prophecy recorded by St. John, where He predicts that His Apostles shall achieve greater works than He had achieved, "because I go unto the Father" (John xiv. 12). The departure of Christ into the true Holy of Holies opened the channel of communication between the eternal Father and the waiting Church; the Spirit was poured out through Christ as the channel, and the result was conviction and conversion; leading the people to cry out, in response to St. Peter's simple statement of facts, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

I. One of the first qualifications absolutely necessary, if a man is to write history tellingly and sympathetically, is a historical imagination. Unless a man can, from a multitude of separate and often independent details, reconstruct the past, realize it vividly for himself, and then depict it with life and force to his readers, he will utterly fail as a historian. The same historical imagination is needed, too, if we wish to realize the full force of the circumstances we are considering. It is hard even for those who do possess such an imagination to throw themselves back into all the circumstances and surroundings of the Apostles at Pentecost; but when we succeed in doing so, then all these circumstances can only be explained on the supposition—the orthodox and catholic supposition—that there must have happened a supernatural occurrence, and that there must have been granted a supernatural power and blessing on the day of Pentecost.

The courage of St. Peter when preaching his sermon is, as we have already noticed, a proof of the descent of the Spirit. The resurrection of his Master had doubtless inspired him with all the power of a new

idea. But St. Peter's history, both before the day of Pentecost and after it, amply proved that mere intellectual conviction could be united with grievous moral cowardice. We cannot doubt, for instance, that St. Peter was intellectually convinced of the justice of the Gentile claims, and their right to a full equality with the Jews, when St. Paul felt compelled to withstand him at Antioch. Yet he was possessed with no such spiritual enthusiasm on the question as that which moved St. Paul, or else he never would have fallen into such lamentable hypocrisy as he displayed on that occasion. The gift of the Spirit was needed by St. Peter before an intellectual conviction could be transformed into an overwhelming spiritual movement, which swept every obstacle from its path. Again, the conduct of the people is a proof of the descent of the Spirit. St. Peter assails their actions, charges upon them the murder of the Messiah, and proclaims the triumph of Christ over all their machinations. Yet they listen quietly, respectfully, without opposition, as mobs do not usually listen to speeches running counter to their prejudices. Some wondrous phenomena, such as the gift of tongues, combined with divinely persuasive eloquence, flinging the ægis of their protection over the preacher's defenceless person, must have so struck the minds of these fanatical Jews as to keep them quiet while St. Peter spoke. But the result of St. Peter's speech was the chiefest evidence that something extraordinary must have happened at Jerusalem in the earliest days of the Church's history. Secular history tells us, as well as the sacred narrative, that Christianity rose again from what seemed its grave at the very spot where, and at the very moment when, the crucifixion had apparently extinguished it for ever.

The evidence of the historian Tacitus is conclusive upon this point. He lived and flourished all through the time when St. Paul's ministry was most active. He was born about the year 50, and had every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the facts concerning the execution of Christ and the rise of Christianity, as they were doubtless laid up in the imperial archives at Rome. His testimony, written at a period when, as some maintain, neither the Acts of the Apostles nor the Gospels of the New Testament were in existence, exactly tallies with the account given by our sacred books. In his *Annals*, book xv., chap. 44, he writes concerning Christianity: "Christus, from whom the name of Christian has its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out in Judæa." So that the Pagan historian, who knew nothing about Christianity save what official pagan documents or popular report told him, agrees with the Scriptures that Christianity was checked for a moment by the death of its founder, and then gained its earliest and most glorious triumph on the very scene of its apparent defeat where—and this is a very important part of the argument—previously the most marvellous wisdom and the most striking signs and wonders had utterly failed to gain any large measure of success. Whence, then, can we explain this fact, or how account for this conscience-stricken cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" unless we assume, what the narrative of our text declares, that the Holy Ghost, in all His convincing and converting power, had been poured out from on high?

And surely our own personal experience daily corro-

borates this view. There may be intellectual conviction and controversial triumph without any spiritual enthusiasm. Sermons may be clever, powerful, convincing, and yet, unless the Spirit's power be sought, and an unction from on high be vouchsafed, no spiritual harvest can be expected. St. Peter's sermon, if viewed from a human standpoint, could no more have been expected to succeed than the Master's. The one new element, however, which now entered into the combination, explains the difference. The Spirit was now given, and men therefore hearkened to the servant where they had turned a deaf ear to the Master. It is a lesson much needed for our generation, especially in the case of the young, and of our Sunday-school system. The religious instruction of youth is much more carefully looked after than it used to be. Primers, handbooks, elementary commentaries, catechists' manuals, are published in profusion, and many think that provided a Sunday or day school distinguishes itself in the examination list, which is now the one great educational test, religious knowledge has been secured. The contrast between St. Peter's success and our Lord's failure warns us that there is a vast difference between religious life and religious knowledge. The most irreligious people, the most bitter opponents of Christianity, have been produced by schools and systems where religious knowledge was literally crammed down the throats of the children in a hard, mechanical, unloving style. But let there be no mistake. I do not object to organised religious instruction. I think, in fact, that a vast amount of Sunday-school teaching is utterly worthless for want of such organization. Our Sunday-school system will, in fact, be thoroughly inefficient, if not useless, as a system, till every Sunday-school has

its teachers' meeting, presided over by a competent instructor, who will carefully teach the teachers themselves in a well-ordered, systematic course. But after all this has been done, we must still remember that Christianity is something more than a system of doctrine, or a Divine scheme of philosophy, which can be worked up like Aristotle's *Ethics* or Mill's *Logic*. Christianity is a Divine power, a power which must be sought in faith, in humiliation, and in prayer; and till the Holy Ghost be duly honoured, and His presence be humbly sought, the finest system and the most elaborate organizations will be found devoid of any fruitful life and vigour.

II. There are many other points of interest in this passage; let us take them one by one as they offer themselves. The people, seized by conviction and in acute pain of conscience, cried out, "What shall we do?" St. Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized." Repent is the Apostle's first rule,—contrasting very strongly with some modern systems which have been devised on a plan very different from that of our Lord and of His Apostles. The preaching of the New Testament is ever the same. John the Baptist came, and his teaching was briefly summed up thus, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John was removed, and Christ came. The lamp ceased to shine, and then the true Light stood revealed; but the teaching was the same, and the Messiah still proclaims, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The system of teaching to which I refer parries the force of our Lord's example, as well as of the Baptist's words, by saying, that was the old dispensation. Till Christ died, the new covenant did not come into force, and therefore Christ taught in His public ministry merely as a Jew,

speaking on Jewish grounds to Jews. But let us see whether such an explanation, which makes void our Lord's personal teachings and commands, is tenable. A reference to this passage sufficiently settles this point. The Master departs and the Spirit is outpoured, and still the apostolic and inspired teaching is just the same. The cry of the multitude, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" produces, from the illuminated Apostle, the same response, "Repent," coupled with a new requirement, "Be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." And the same message has ever since continued to be the basis of all real spiritual work. Simon Magus is found by St. Peter with his mind intellectually convinced, but with his affections untouched and his heart spiritually dead. To Simon Magus Peter delivers the same message, "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." John Wesley was one of the greatest evangelists that ever lived and worked for God. During the whole sixty years of his continuous labours, from the time when he taught his pupils in Oxford College and the prisoners in Oxford jail down to the last sermon that he preached, his ministry and teaching were modelled upon that of the New Testament,—it was ever a preaching of repentance. He counted it utterly useless and hopeless to preach the comforts of the gospel before he had made men feel and wince beneath the terrors of the law and the sense of offended justice. Modern times have seen, however, a strange perversion of the gospel method, and some have taught that repentance was not to be urged or even mentioned to Christian congregations.

This is one of the leading points which the Plymouth Brethren specially press in the course of their destruc-

tive and guerilla-like assaults upon the communions of reformed Christendom. The apostolic doctrine of repentance finds no place in their scheme; while again their teaching on this subject, or something very like it, is often reproduced, all unconsciously it may be, by the conductors of those mission services so common throughout the country. It is as hard now to preserve a just balance in teaching, as it was in the days of St. Paul and St. James. It is no easy matter so to preach repentance as not to discourage the truly humble soul; so to proclaim God's forgiving love as not to encourage presumption and carelessness.

I have said, indeed, that the doctrine of the Plymouth body on this point is a modern one. It is modern, indeed, when compared with the genuine teaching of the New Testament; but still it is, in fact, ancient, for it dates back to the Antinomians, who, two hundred and fifty years ago, created a great sensation among the Puritan divines. A brief historical narrative will prove this. The sermons of Dr. Tobias Crisp and Fisher's *Marrow of Modern Divinity* are books whose very titles are now forgotten, and yet the diligent student will there find all those ideas about repentance, justification, and assurance which are now produced as marvellous new truths, though reprobated two centuries ago as earnestly by Churchmen, like Bull, Beveridge, and Stillingfleet, as by Howe, and Baxter, and Williams among the Nonconformists and Puritans. The denial of the necessity for Christian repentance was based, by the logical Antinomians of the olden time, upon the theory that Christ bore in His own person the literal sins of the elect; so that an elect person has nothing whatsoever to do with his sins save assure himself, by an act of faith, that his sins were forgiven and rendered

completely non-existent eighteen hundred years ago. The formula which they delight in and I have heard used, even by Churchmen, is this: "Believe that you are saved, and then you are saved." The result of this teaching in every age, wherever it has appeared, is not far to seek. The main stress of all Christian effort is devoted not to the attainment of likeness to Christ, or that pursuit of holiness without which the beatific vision of God is impossible. The great point urged by this party in every age is the supreme importance of assurance which they identify with saving faith.[1] Therefore it is that they discourage, aye, and go farther, utterly reject, all teaching of repentance. The words of one of those old writers puts the matter in its simplest form. In the reign of James II. and William III. there arose a great controversy in London touching this very point. Dr. Williams, the founder of the well-known library in Grafton Street, London, was the leader on one side, while the sermons of Tobias Crisp were the rallying-point on the other. Williams and Baxter maintained the importance of repentance and the absolute necessity of good works for salvation. On the opposite side, the views and doctrines which we have seen pressed in modern times were explicitly stated, but with far more fearlessness and logical power than are ever now used. Here are a few of the propositions which Dr. Williams felt himself bound to refute. I shall give them at some length, that my readers may see how ancient is this heresy. "The elect are discharged from all their sins by the act of God laying their sins upon Christ on the

[1] This point has been admirably discussed by Dr. Salmon in his sermon on "Present Salvation" in his volume of sermons styled *The Reign of Law*, pp. 295-99.

cross, and consequently that the elect upon the death of Christ ceased to be sinners, and ever since sins committed by them are none of their sins, they are the sins of Christ." Again, the Antinomians taught, in language often still reproduced, "Men have nothing to do in order to salvation, nor in sanctification a jot the way of any person to heaven. Nor can the duties and graces of the elect, nor even faith itself, do them the least good, or prevent the least evil; while, on the other hand, the grossest sins which the elect commit cannot do them the least harm, nor ought they to fear the least hurt from their own sins." While again, coming still closer to the point on which we have been insisting, they declared, according to Dr. Williams, that "the covenant of grace hath no condition to be performed on man's part, even though in the strength of Christ. Neither is faith itself the condition of this covenant, but all the saving benefits of this covenant actually and really belong to the elect before they are born, yea, and even against their will;" while as to the nature of faith, they taught "that saving faith is nothing else but our persuasion or absolute concluding within ourselves that our sins are pardoned, and that Christ is ours." Hence they derived a dogma of their own, directly and plainly contradictory of the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of repentance, "that Christ is offered to blasphemers, murderers, and the worst of sinners, that they, remaining ignorant, unconvinced, and resolved in their purpose to continue such, may be assured they have a full interest in Christ; and this by only concluding in their own minds that Christ is theirs." It is plain to any one fully acquainted with modern religious thought, that all the special doctrines of Plymouthism concerning justification, re-

pentance, and faith, are involved in the statements which Dr. Williams set himself to refute, and which he does refute most ably, in works long since consigned to the oblivion of our great libraries, though well worthy of careful study amid the troubles of the present age.[1] Assurance, a present knowledge of a present salvation, present peace, these are the only topics pressed upon the unconverted. If the multitude at Jerusalem had asked the same question from our modern teachers which they asked from the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the reply would have been, "Do you know you are saved? If not, believe that you are saved, believe that Jesus died for you." But not one of them would have given the apostolic reply, "Repent, and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," because the doctrine of repentance and the value and use of the sacrament of baptism find no place in this new-fangled scheme.

III. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." These words form the basis of a well-known clause in the Nicene Creed, which says, "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins." They suggest in addition some very important discussions. The position which baptism occupies in apostolic teaching is

[1] This controversy between the Antinomian party and the London Nonconformists of the orthodox sort is now almost unknown, and yet it created great excitement in religious circles, conformist and nonconformist, in the time of William III. Bishop Stillingfleet of Worcester, the aged Baxter, and many of the leading divines, joined in it. The echoes of it will be found resounding in the more modern controversy between John Wesley and Fletcher on the one side, and Rowland Hill and Lady Huntingdon on the other, about the year 1770. A brief account of Dr. Daniel Williams will be found in Schaff's edition of Herzog's *Cyclopædia*; see also Calamy's *Life* i., 323.

worthy of careful notice. It is pressed upon the multitude as a present duty, and as the result there were three thousand persons baptized in that one day. It was just the same with Cornelius the centurion, and with the Philippian jailer whom St. Paul converted. Baptism did not then succeed a long course of preparatory training and instruction, as now is the case in the mission field. When men in apostolic times received the rudiments of the faith, the sacrament of baptism was administered, as being the channel or door of admission into Christ's Church; and then, being once admitted into God's house, it was firmly believed that the soul's life would grow and develop at a vastly accelerated rate. A grave question here suggests itself, whether baptism of converts from paganism is not often too long delayed? The Apostles evidently regarded the Church as an hospital where the wounds of the soul were to be healed, as a Divine school where the ignorance of the soul was to be dissipated, and therefore at once admitted the converts to the sacrament upon the profession of their rudimentary faith. The Church soon reversed this process, and demanded an amount of spiritual knowledge and a development of spiritual life as the conditions of baptism, which should have been looked for as the result of admission within her sacred ranks, forgetful of that great missionary law laid down by the Master Himself, which places baptism first and teaching afterwards, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We freely admit that there may have been a quickened spiritual vitality, a stronger spiritual life, in the case of the earliest converts, enabling

them in the course of a few hours to attain a spiritual level which demanded a more prolonged effort on the part of the later disciples. When we come to the times of the later apostolic age, and inquire from such a book as the lately-discovered *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, what the practice of the Church was then, we see that experience had taught a more regular, a less hasty course of action.[1] The law of baptism in the *Didache*, as the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* is usually called, runs thus: "Now concerning baptism, thus baptize ye; having first uttered all these things, baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water. But if thou hast not running water, baptize in other water; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour water upon the head thrice, into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and whatever others can; but the baptized thou shalt command to fast for one or two days before."

From these words it is plain that the immediate baptism of converts had ceased probably with the first

[1] As some readers may not know what the work called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* is, let me explain its history in a few words. Early Christian writers, from the year A.D. 200, speak of a work called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* in the highest terms. It was evidently, as known by them, a manual used in the catechetical instruction of the young. This manual was known to all the early ages, but disappeared from the view of the Western Church during the middle ages. Nearly twenty years ago it was discovered in Constantinople by the learned Greek Bishop Bryennios, and published by him about ten years ago. It is assigned by some critics to the concluding years of the first century. A convenient and cheap edition of it will be found in the second volume of the Apostolic Fathers in Griffith and Farran's "Ancient and Modern Library." It is called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, or else the *Didache*, using a Greek title, which has the advantage of being shorter.

organization of the Church. A pause was instituted between the first conviction of the truth and the complete initiation which baptism involved, but not such a period of delay as the months and even years over which the preparation for baptism was subsequently spread. This delay of baptism sprang out of a mistaken view of this Divine sacrament. Men came to look on it as a charm, whereby not merely admission was obtained to the Divine society which our Lord had founded, but also as bringing with it a complete purgation from the sins of a careless life. Men postponed it, therefore, to the very last, so that all sins might be swept away at once. The Emperor Constantine was a good example of this mischievous extreme. He was a man who took a kind of interest in theological matters. Like our own King James I., he considered it his duty to settle the religious affairs of his empire, even as his predecessors had done in the days of paganism. He presided over Church councils, dictated Church formularies, and exercised the same control in the Church as in the State, being all the time unbaptized. He was scarce aught but a pagan too in disposition and temper. He retained pagan symbols, titles, and observances, and imbrued his hands, Herod-like, in the blood of his own family. Yet he delayed his baptism to the very last, under the notion that then there could be thus effected at one stroke the complete removal of the accumulated sins of a lifetime.

IV. The comparison of the passage just quoted from the *Teaching of the Apostles* with the words of my text suggests other topics. The Plymouth Brethren, at least in some of their numerous ramifications, and other sects, have grounded upon the words, "be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ," a tenet

that baptism should not be conferred in the name of the Trinity, but in that of Jesus alone. It is indeed admitted that while our Lord commanded the use of the historic baptismal formula in the concluding words of St. Matthew's Gospel, the formula itself is never expressly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Not merely on the day of Pentecost, but on several other occasions, Christian baptism is described as if the Trinitarian formula was unknown. In the tenth chapter Cornelius and his household are described as "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." In the nineteenth chapter St. Paul converts a number of the Baptist's disciples to a fuller and richer faith in Christ. They were at once "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." But a reference to the newly-discovered *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* explains the difficulty, offering an interesting example of the manner in which modern discoveries have helped to illustrate and confirm the Acts of the Apostles. In the *Didache*, as in the Acts, the expression "baptism in the name of the Lord" is used. The *Didache* lays down with respect to the communion, "Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized into the name of the Lord." Yet this does not exclude the time-honoured formula of Christendom. The same apostolic manual lays down the rule, a little before this prohibition which we have just quoted, "Baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and then in the tenth chapter describes baptism thus administered in the threefold name, as baptism in the name of the Lord; and thus it was doubtless in the case of the Acts. For the sake of brevity St. Luke speaks of Christian baptism as baptism in the name of Christ, never dreaming at the same time that this was exclusive

of the divinely appointed formula, as certain moderns have taught. The Acts of the Apostles, and the *Didache* prove their primitive character, and show that they deduce their origin from the same early epoch, because they both describe Christian baptism as performed in the name of Christ; and yet this fact does not exclude, according to either, the use of the threefold Name. It is evident that, whether in the Acts or in the *Didache*, baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was regarded as baptism especially in the name of Jesus Christ, because while the Father and the Spirit were known to the Jews, the one new element introduced was that of the name of Jesus, whom God had made both Lord and Christ. Baptism in the Triune Name was emphatically baptism in the name of the Lord. This passage, when compared with the *Didache*, sheds light on another point. The mode wherein baptism should be administered has been a point often discussed. Some have maintained the absolutely binding and universal character of immersion; others have stood at the opposite extreme, and upheld the method of sprinkling. The Church of England, in union with the ancient Church, has laid down no hard-and-fast rule on the subject. She recognises immersion as the normal idea in a warm Eastern climate, but she allows pouring (not sprinkling) of water to be substituted for immersion, which has, as a matter of fact, taken the place in the Western Church of the more regular and ancient immersion.[1] The construction of the ancient Churches, with their baptisteries surrounded with cur-

[1] The method of sprinkling is completely unknown to the Church ancient or modern, and should be absolutely rejected, as tending to a disuse of the element of water at all.

tains, and the female assistants for the service of their own sex, amply proves that in the ancient Church, as to this day in the Eastern Church, baptism was ordinarily administered by immersion. The Church proved its Eastern origin by the mode wherein its initial sacrament was at first applied. But it also showed its power of adaptation to Western nations by allowing the alternative of pouring water when she dealt with the needs of a colder climate. Yet from the beginning the Church cannot have made the validity of her sacraments depend upon the quantity of water that was used. Take the cases reported in the Acts of the Apostles, or the rules prescribed in the apostolic manual, the *Didache*. In the latter it is expressly said that pouring with water shall suffice if a larger quantity is not at hand. On the day of Pentecost it was clearly impossible to immerse three thousand persons in the city of Jerusalem. The Ethiopian eunuch baptized by St. Philip in the wilderness could not have been immersed. He came to a stream trickling along, scarce sufficient to lave his feet, or perhaps rather to a well in the desert; the water was deep down, and reached only, as in the case of Jacob's well, by a rope or chain. Even if the water could have been reached, common sense, not to speak of any higher motive, would have forbidden the pollution of an element so needful for human life. The baptism of the eunuch must have been by pouring or affusion, as must also have been the case with the Philippian jailer. The difficulties of the case are forgotten when people insist that immersion must necessarily have been the universal rule in ancient times.[1] Men and women

[1] The case of Perpetua and Felicitas, and the other famous martyrs of

were baptized separately, deaconesses officiating in the case of the women. When immersion was used the men descended naked, or almost so, into the baptistery, which was often a building quite separate and distinct from the church, with elaborate arrangements for changing garments.[1] The Church, in the days of earliest freedom and purity, left her children free in those points of minor detail, refusing to hamper herself or limit her usefulness by a restriction which would have equally barred entrance to her fold in the burning deserts or in the ice-bound regions of the frozen north, where baptism by immersion would have been equally impossible.

Again, the extent of the baptismal commission is indicated in this passage. "Make disciples of all the nations by baptism" are the words of our Lord. "Be baptized, every one of you, for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off," is St. Peter's application of this passage. St. Peter's language admits of various interpretations. Like much of Scripture, the speaker, when uttering these words, meant probably one thing, while the words themselves mean something much wider, more catholic and universal. When Peter spake thus he proclaimed the world-wide

Carthage in the beginning of the third century, proves that pouring with water must have sufficed for baptism in a Church so intensely conservative as the Church of North Africa. Tertullian in his writings often reproves its members for the superstitious extremes to which they pushed their conservative feelings, imitating every ancient Christian custom, rational or irrational. Felicitas and her friends were baptized in prison, where they were thrust into a noisome dungeon. How could they have been immersed in such a place? This case is good evidence for the practice of the second century as well.

[1] See the articles on Baptism and Baptistery in Smith and Cheetham's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, vol. i.

character of Christianity, just as when he quoted the prophet Joel's language he declared the mission of the Comforter in its most catholic aspect, embracing Gentiles as well as Jews. "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." But St. Peter never thought of the full scope of his words. He meant, doubtless, that the promise of pardon, and acceptance, and citizenship in the heavenly kingdom was to those Jews that were present in Jerusalem, and to their children, and to all of the Jews of the dispersion scattered afar off amid the Gentiles. Had Peter thought otherwise, had he perceived the wider meaning of his words, he would have had no hesitation about the reception of the Gentiles, and the baptism of Cornelius would not have demanded a fresh revelation.

We often, indeed, invest the Apostles and the writers of Holy Scripture with an intellectual grasp of a supernatural kind, which prevents us recognising that growth in Divine knowledge which found place in them, as it found place in the Divine Master Himself. We silently vote them infallible on every topic, because the Spirit's presence was abundantly vouchsafed. The inspiration they enjoyed guided their language, and led them to use words which, while expressing their own sentiments, admitted a deeper meaning and embraced a wider scope than the speaker intended. It was just the same with the Apostles' words as with their conduct in other respects. The presence and inspiration of the Spirit did not make them sinless, did not destroy human infirmities. It did not destroy St. Peter's moral cowardice, or St. Paul's hot temper, or St. Barnabas's family partiality and nepotism; and neither did that presence illumine at once St. Peter's natural prejudices and intellectual backwardness, which led him long to

restrain the mercies and lovingkindness of the Lord to His ancient people, though here on the day of Pentecost we find him using language which plainly included the Gentiles as well as the Jews within the covenant of grace. A farther question concerning the language of St. Peter here arises. Do not his words indicate that children were fit subjects for baptism? Do they not justify the practice of infant baptism? I honestly confess that, apart from the known practice of the Jews, St. Peter's language would not necessarily mean so much. But then when we take the known practice of the Jews into consideration; when we remember that St. Peter was speaking to a congregation composed of Jews of the dispersion, accustomed, in their own missionary work among the heathen, to baptize children as well as adults, we must admit that, in the absence of any prohibition to the contrary, the effect of the words of St. Peter upon his hearers must have been this; they would have acted when Christians as they had already done as Jews, and baptized proselytes of every age and condition on their admission to the Christian fold. (See Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.*, St. Matt. iii. 6.)

V. Such was St. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. The results of it in the unity of doctrine and discipline and the community of goods will come before us in subsequent chapters. One thought stands out prominent as we survey this second chapter. Here in very deed we find an ample fulfilment of our Lord's promise to St. Peter which has been so completely misused and misunderstood, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" a passage which has been made one of the scriptural foundations of the monstrous claims of the See of Rome to an absolute upremacy alike over the Christian Church and over

the individual conscience. In this respect, however, Scripture is its own best interpreter. Just reflect how it is in this matter. Christ first of all defines, in the celebrated series of parables related in the thirteenth of St. Matthew, what the kingdom of heaven is. It is the kingdom He had come to reveal, the society He was establishing, the Church and dispensation of which He is the Head and Chief. To St. Peter he gave the keys, or power of opening the doors, of this kingdom; and this office St. Peter duly executed. He opened the door of the kingdom of heaven to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles by the conversion and baptism of Cornelius. St. Peter himself recognised on one occasion the special Providence which watched over him in this matter. He points out, in his speech to the brethren gathered at the first council held at Jerusalem, that "a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel;" a passage which seems a reminiscence of the earlier promise of Christ, which Peter must have so well remembered, and a humble recognition of the glorious fulfilment which that promise had received at the Divine hand.[1] The promise was a purely personal one peculiar to St. Peter, as purely personal as the revelation made to him on the housetop at Joppa, and as such received a complete fulfilment in the Church's infant days. But Rome's vaulting ambition would not be content with the fulfilment which satisfied St. Peter himself, and on this text has been built up a series of claims which, culminating in the celebrated traffic in indulgences, precipitated the great revolution involved in the German Reformation.

[1] See Dr. John Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, St. Matt. xvi. 19.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST MIRACLE.

"Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."—ACTS iii. 1-6.

THE Acts of the Apostles considered as the first history of the Church may be viewed as typical of all ecclesiastical history. It is in this respect a microcosm wherein, on a small scale, we see represented the triumphs and the mistakes, the strength and the weakness, of God's elect people throughout the ages. Thus in the incident before us, embracing the whole of the third chapter and the greater portion of the fourth, we have set forth a victory of the Apostles, their subsequent persecution, together with the blessing and strength vouchsafed in and through that persecution. The time of these events cannot be fixed with any great exactness. They occurred probably within a few weeks or months of the day of Pentecost. That is the nearest we can approach to a precise date. There seems indeed to have been a pause after the excite-

ment and success of Pentecost, and for this we think that we can see a good reason. The Apostles must have had plenty to do with the vast multitude gathered upon the day of Pentecost, striving to lead them into a fuller knowledge of the faith. We are apt to imagine at first sight that supernatural enlightenment was vouchsafed to these earliest converts, superseding any necessity for careful and patient instruction, so that upon their baptism the whole work was completed. But when we reflect upon other cases in the New Testament, we can easily see that the three thousand souls converted by St. Peter's speech must have needed and received a great deal of teaching. The Church of Corinth was one of St. Paul's own founding, and upon it he lavished careful attention for a year and a half; yet we see from his Epistles to the Corinthians how much guidance was needed by them even in elementary questions of morals, how rapidly the Church fell into grossest licence when deprived of his personal ministrations. Theophilus again, to whom the Acts were addressed by St. Luke, is reminded, in the preface of the Gospel, of the catechetical instruction in Christian truth which he had received.[1] Assuredly, then, the small band of the twelve Apostles and their few male assistants must have had their hands full enough for many weeks after Pentecost, endeavouring to give their converts such an insight into the great principles of the faith as would enable them to carry back to their various distant homes a competent knowledge of the laws and doctrines of the

[1] The apostolic manual called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, to which we have already referred, proves that the Church of the Apostles' day required catechisms and introductory formularies just as much as we do.

new dispensation. A few moments' reflection will show that the newly-baptized had much to learn about Christ,—the facts of His life, His doctrines, sacraments, the constitution of His Church, and the position allotted to the Apostles,—before they could be considered sufficiently rooted and grounded in the faith. And if this was so with converts from Judaism, then how much more must such careful instruction after baptism have been found needful in the case of the Gentiles when the time came for their admission? Much preparatory work had been done for the Jews by their Old Testament training. They had not much to learn from the Apostles in practical morality; they had a right conception of God, His character, and His service. But as for the Pagans, their whole intellectual and spiritual life, all their notions and conceptions about God, and life, and morals, were all hopelessly wrong. The Apostles and the earliest teachers had then, and missionaries amongst the heathen have still, to make a clearance of the whole pagan ground, laying a new foundation, and erecting thereon a new structure, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. St. Paul recognised the vast importance of such diligent pastoral work and catechetical training after baptism when writing his pastoral Epistles, because bitter experience had taught him their value. At Corinth for more than two years, and at Ephesus for three years, he had laboured diligently in building up his converts. And notwithstanding all his exertions, how quickly the Corinthians fell away into pagan habits of unbridled licence as soon as he left them! The Acts of the Apostles by this pause in evangelistic work which we here trace, strikes a note of warning concerning the future missionary work of the Church, speaking clearly about the neces-

sity of diligent pastoral care, and prophesying of the certain relapses into wild excesses which may be expected to occur among those who have only been just rescued from the mire of paganism. This is one explanation of the pause in apostolic work we here seem to perceive.

Again, the analogy of the faith, the laws of human nature, suggest the need of a period of restful calm after the Pentecostal excitement, and previous to any new and successful advance. So it has been in God's dealing in the past. The excitement connected with the first attempts made by Moses to rescue his people was followed by the forty years' exile in Midian, which again led to their triumphant rescue from bondage. Elijah's victory over Jezebel and her idol priests was followed by the retreat of forty days to Horeb. The excitement of our Lord's baptism was succeeded by the forty days' fast in the wilderness. The human mind cannot be ever on the strain. Excitement must be followed by repose, or else the course of action adopted will be hurried, imperfect, transient in its results. The works of God in nature are never such. As a modern poet has nobly sung :—

> "One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee;
> One lesson which in every wind is blown;
> One lesson of two duties kept at one,
> Though the loud world proclaim their enmity;—
> Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity;
> Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
> Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
> Too great for haste, too high for rivalry."[1]

There is great calm and dignity in nature; and there was great calm and dignity in grace when God was

[1] Sonnet by Matthew Arnold on Rural Work.

laying the foundations of His kingdom by the hands of His Apostles. There never was an age which more needed this lesson of nature and grace alike than this nineteenth century.[1] The religion of the age has been infected by the Spirit of the world, and men think that the fortresses of sin and ignorance will fall, provided there be used a sufficient quantity of noise, of puffing, and of excitement. I do not wish to find the slightest fault with energetic action. The Church of Christ has been in the past perhaps a little too dignified in its methods and operations. It has hesitated, where St. Paul never would have hesitated, to adapt itself to changed circumstances, and has ofttimes refused, like a timorous lawyer, to venture on some new and untried sphere because there was no precedent. The Reformers and their first followers were an illustration of this. The utter lack of missionary spirit and effort among the Reformers is one of the darkest blots upon their history. How sadly they contrast with the Jesuit Society, which started into existence at the same period of the world's history. No one is more keenly alive to the faults and shortcomings of that world-renowned Society than I am, yet I heartily admire the energy and devotion with which, from its earliest days, the Society of Jesus flung itself into missionary work, endeavouring to repair the losses which the Papacy sustained in Europe by fresh conquests in India, China, and America. The Reformers were so busy in bitter controversies among themselves, and so intent upon endeavouring to fathom God's decrees and purposes, that they forgot the primary duty of the Church to spread the light and truth which it has received; they were

[1] This line of thought has been already touched upon in Lect. IV., pp. 61-3.

deficient in Christian energy, and thus brought upon themselves the blight and curse of spiritual barrenness. Controversy evermore brings with it the desolation of spiritual leanness. Men cease to really believe in a religion which they only know upon paper, and only think of as a thing to be discussed. Living contact with human souls and human wants saves religion, because it translates it from a mere dead dogma into a living fact. A man who has come to doubt doctrinal statements which he has never verified, will be brought back to faith by the irresistible evidence of sinful lives changed and broken hearts comforted.

The Church of England has again and again manifested this spirit. In Ireland she refused to give the nation the Liturgy and the Bible in the Irish tongue. In Wales she hesitated in condescending to vulgar wants, and long refused to bestow a native episcopate upon the Celts of England, because the evil tradition of centuries, down from the age of the Norman conquest, had ordained that no Welshman should be a bishop. But still, while I am opposed to the Church binding itself in fetters of that kind, I am equally of opinion that there is a middle course between dignified idleness and extravagant carnal sensationalism. I have heard efforts advocated for home missionary work which, I am sure, would never have met with the approbation of the first missionaries of the Cross. The Church must be energetic, but the Church need not adopt the methods of quack medicine-sellers, or of the strolling circus. Such methods were not unknown in the primitive ages of the Church.

The preachers of the stoic philosophy strove in the second century to counteract the efforts of the Christian Church by reforming paganism, and by preaching it

vigorously. They adopted every means to attract the public attention and interest—eccentricity, vulgarity, coarseness; and yet they failed, and were defeated by a society which trusted, not in human devices and carnal forces, but in the supernatural power of God the Holy Ghost.[1] The Montanists again, towards the close of the second century, fell into the same error. The Montanists are in many respects one of the most interesting of the early Christian sects. They tried to retain the customs and the spirit of apostolic Christianity, but they mistook the true methods of action. They confounded physical excitement with spiritual fervour, and strove by weird dances and strange cries, borrowed from the pagans of the Phrygian mountains, to bind to themselves the sweet influences of the Heavenly Comforter. The Church of that period diligently avoided the error of pagan stoics and of Christian schismatics. As it was in the second century, so was it just after Pentecost. The Church followed close upon its Master's footsteps, of whom it was said, "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets," and developed in quietness and retirement the spiritual life of the thousands who had crowded into the door of faith which Peter had opened.

Again there is a lesson in this period of pause and seclusion, not merely for the Church in its corporate capacity, but for individual souls. The spirit of interior sanctity is nourished most chiefly during such times of retirement and obscurity. Obscurity has

[1] This episode in the history of paganism in the second century is very little known. It has been well depicted in an interesting little book, *The Age of the Antonines*, by the Rev. W. W. Capes, M.A., which only costs a couple of shillings. Chap. VIII. should specially be consulted.

indeed many advantages when viewed from the standpoint of the spiritual life. Publicity and high station and multiplicity of affairs bring with them many disadvantages. They deprive us of that peace and calm which enable a man to contrast the things of time with those of eternity, and to value them in their true light. Over-activity, fussiness, even in the most spiritual matters, is a dire enemy of true heart belief, and therefore of true strength of spirit. The Master Himself felt it so. There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. Then it was He said, "Come ye into the desert, that ye may rest awhile." The excitement and strain of Pentecost, and all the subsequent efforts which Pentecost entailed, must have told seriously upon the Apostles, and so they imitated the Master, that they might renew their exhausted vigour at its primal fountain. How many a man, busy in missions, or preaching, or the thousand other forms which evangelistic and religious work now takes, would be infinitely better if this apostolic lesson were duly learned. How many a terrible scandal has arisen simply from a disregard and contempt for it. If men will think they can labour, as this passage shows the Apostles could not, without thought and reflection, and interior communion with God; if they will spend all their strength in external effort and never make time and secure seasons for spiritual replenishment, they may create much noise for a time, but their toil will be fruitless, and if they are saved themselves it will only be as by fire.

The period of retirement and obscurity came however to an end at last. The Apostles never intended to form an order purely contemplative. Such an idea, in fact,

never could have entered into the mind of one of those early Christians. They remembered that their Master had expressly said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and salt is useless if kept stored up in a vessel by itself, and never applied to any object where its curative properties might have free scope. When the spirit of Eastern gnosticism, springing from the dualism of Persia, invaded the Church, and gained a permanent hold within it, then men began to despise their bodies and life, and all that life entails. Like Eastern fanatics, they desired to abstract themselves as much as possible from the things and duties of the present, and they invented, or rather adopted from the farther East, purely contemplative orders, which spent useless lives, striving, like their prototypes of India, to rise superior to the positions which God had assigned them. Such were not the Apostles. They used rest, contemplation, they did not abuse them; and when their tone and power was restored, they issued forth again upon the field of religious activity, and joined in the public worship of the crowd. "Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."

The action of Peter and John in thus frequenting the temple worship gives us a glimpse into the state of feeling and thought which prevailed then and for a great many years after in the Church of Jerusalem. The Church of that city naturally clung longest of all to the old Jewish connection. Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (iv. 5), tells us that the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were Hebrews, and that all the members of the Church were Hebrews too. It was only, in fact, upon the final destruction of Jerusalem, which happened under Hadrian, after the rebellion of Barcochba, A.D. 135, that the Church of Jerusalem

shook itself completely free from the trammels of Judaism.[1]

But in those earliest days of the Church the Apostles naturally could not recognise the course of the Divine development. They cherished the notion that Judaism and Christianity would be found compatible the one with the other. They had not yet recognised what St. Stephen first of all, and then St. Paul, and most chiefly the author of the Hebrews, came to recognise, that Judaism and Christianity as full-blown systems were absolutely antagonistic; that the Jewish dispensation was obsolete, antiquated, and must utterly and for ever fade before a nobler dispensation that was once for all to take its place. It is hard for us to realize the feelings of the Apostles at this great transition epoch, and yet it is well for us to do so, because their conduct is full of lessons specially suited for seasons of transition. The Apostles never seem to me more clearly under the direction of the Divine Spirit than in their whole course of action at this time. They proceeded in faith, but not in haste. They held firmly to the truths they had gained, and they waited patiently upon God, till the course of His providence showed them how to co-ordinate the old system with the new truths,—until He had taught them what parts of the ancient covenant should be dropped and what retained. Their conduct has instruction very suitable for the present age, when God is giving His Church fresh light on many a question through the investigations of science. Well, indeed, will it be for Christian people to have their hearts grounded, as the Apostles' were, in a spirit of Divine love, knowing

[1] See the article on Barcochba in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. i.

personally in whom they have believed; and then, strong in that inner revelation of God to the spirit, which surpasses in might and power all other evidences, they may patiently wait the evolution of His purposes. The prophetic declaration is true for every age, "He that believeth will not make haste."

The circumstances of the first apostolic miracle were simple enough. Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of the evening sacrifice. They were entering the temple by the gate well known to all dwellers at Jerusalem as the Beautiful Gate, and there they met the cripple whom they healed in the name and by the power of Jesus of Nazareth. The spot where this miracle was performed was familiar to the Jews of that day, though its precise locality is still a matter of controversy. Some hold that this Beautiful Gate was one described by Josephus in his *Wars of the Jews* (v. 5, 3) as surpassingly splendid, being composed of Corinthian brass, and called the Gate of Nicanor. Others think that it was the gate Shushan, which stood in the neighbourhood of Solomon's Porch; while others identify it with the gate Chulda, which led into the Court of the Gentiles. It was most probably the first of these which was situated on the eastern side of the outermost court of the temple, looking towards the valley of Kedron.[1] Here was gathered a crowd of beggars, such as then frequented the temples of the pagans as well as of the Jews, and such as still throng

[1] See Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, Acts iii. 2. De Vogüé in his great work on the Temple of Jerusalem, fully gives the traditions which attached themselves to this gate. In the fourth century it was celebrated by the Christian poet Prudentius, and in the fifth or sixth a gate called the Golden Gate was erected on its site. This gate still remains, and De Vogüé in his plates vii. to xii. gives a series of views of it.

the approaches of Eastern and many Western churches. Out of this crowd one man addressed Peter and John, asking an alms. This man was well known to the regular worshippers in the temple. He was a cripple, and one long accustomed to haunt the same spot, for he was above forty years old. Peter replied to his prayer in the well-known words, "Silver and gold have I none: but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk;" and then he performed one of the few miracles ascribed to the direct action of St. Peter. Here it may be asked, Why was this miracle of healing the cripple at the temple gate the only one recorded of those earliest signs and wonders wrought by apostolic hands? The answer seems to be threefold: this miracle was typical of the Church's future work; it was the occasion of St. Peter's testimony before the Sanhedrin; and it led up to the first persecution which the Jewish authorities raised against the Church.

Viewing the Acts of the Apostles as a type of what all Church history was to be, and a Divine exposition of the principles which should guide the Church in times of suffering as well as in times of action, we can see good and solid reasons for the insertion of this particular narrative. First, then, this miracle was typical of the Church's work, for it was a beggar that was healed, and this beggar lay helpless and hopeless at the very doors of the temple. The beggar typified humanity at large. He was laid, indeed, in a splendid position,—before him was extended the magnificent panorama of hills which stood round about Jerusalem; above him rose the splendours of the building upon which the Herods had lavished the riches and wonders of their gorgeous conceptions,—but he was nothing the

better for all this material grandeur till touched by the power which lay in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And the beggar of the Beautiful Gate was in all these respects the fittest object for St. Peter's earliest public miracle, because he was exactly typical of mankind's state. Humanity, Jew and Gentile alike, lay at the very gate of God's temple of the universe. Men could discourse learnedly, too, concerning that sanctuary, and they could admire its beauteous proportions. Poets, philosophers, and wise men had treated of the temple of the universe in works which can never be surpassed, but all the while they lay outside its sacred precincts. They had no power to stand up and enter in, leaping, and walking, and praising God. It is very important, in this age of material civilization and of intellectual advance, that the Church should insist vigorously upon the great truth taught by this miracle. The age of the Incarnation must have seemed to the men of that time the very acme of civilization and of knowledge; and yet the testimony of all history and of all literature is that just then mankind was in the most deplorable state of moral and spiritual degradation. The witness of St. Paul in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is amply borne out by the testimony, conscious and unconscious, of pagan antiquity. A writer of the last century, now to a great extent forgotten, Dr. Leland by name, investigated this point in the fullest manner in his great work on the necessity of a Divine revelation, demonstrating that mankind, even when highly civilized, educated, cultured, lies like a beggar at the door of the temple, till touched by the hand and power of the Incarnate God.

This miracle of healing the beggar was typical of the Church's work again, because it was a beggar who thus

received a blessing when the Church roused itself to the discharge of its great mission. The first man healed and benefited by St. Peter was a poor man, and the Church's work has ever led her to deal with the poor, and to interest herself most keenly in their well-being. This first miracle is typical of Christian work, because Christianity is essentially the religion of the masses. At times, indeed, Christian teachers may have seemed to rank themselves on the side of power and riches alone; but then men should take good care to distinguish between the inconsistent conduct of Christian teachers and the essential principles of Christianity. The founder of Christianity was a carpenter, and its earliest benediction pronounced the blessedness of those that are poor in spirit, and ever since the greatest triumphs of Christianity have been gained amongst the poor. Christian hagiology, Christian legend, and Christian history alike, have combined to attest this truth. The Church calendar is decorated with lists of saints, some of them of very doubtful character, while others of them have stories connected with their careers full of meaning and rich with lessons for this generation. Thus, for instance, October 25th is the feast of a martyr, St. Crispin, from whom the great trade of shoemakers is designated. "The sons of St. Crispin" is a title going back to the earliest ages of the Church's love. St. Crispin was a Roman senator, brought up and nourished amid all that luxury with which pagan Rome surrounded the children of the highest classes. Crispin became acquainted with the faith of the followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth amid the dire persecutions which marked the final struggle between Christianity and paganism under the Emperor Diocletian during the earliest years of the fourth century.

He was baptized, and feeling that a life of gilded idleness was inconsistent with his Master's example, he resigned his place, position, and property, retired into Gaul, and there devoted himself to the trade of shoemaking, as being one which could be exercised in great quietness. Manual toil was at that time considered an occupation fitted only for slaves, for we ought never to forget that the dignity of labour is no human invention, nor is it part of the religions of nature. Nay, rather, the dignity of idleness was the doctrine of Greek and Roman paganism. St. Crispin recognized the great law of labour taught by Christ and taught by His Apostles, and became the most successful of shoemakers, preaching at the same time the gospel with such success that the persecutors selected him as one of their earliest victims in that district of Gaul where he resided.[1] It has been just the same in every age. The true power of the Church has been ever displayed in preaching the gospel to the children of toil. An interesting example of this may be gathered from an age which we are apt to think specially dark. In mediæval times the secular or parochial clergy became very lax and careless throughout these islands. The mendicant friars, the followers of St. Francis, came and settled everywhere in the slums of the great towns, devoting themselves to the work of preaching to the poor. And they speedily

[1] The story of St. Crispin is told at length by the Bollandists in the *Acta Sanctorum* for October, vol. xi., pp. 495 to 540. St. Chrysostom in one of his orations paints a vigorous picture of two imaginary cities, one where all the people were rich, with an abundance of slaves, and therefore dependent on others for all the necessaries and conveniences of life; the other city inhabited by none but poor freemen, where everyone laboured at manual toil and provided for his wants by his own exertions. He then asks which is the happier; unhesitatingly giving the palm to the city of poverty, labour, and freedom.

attained a marvellous power over men. The Franciscans in the thirteenth century were exactly like the early Methodists in the last century. Both societies placed their chapels among the abodes of want; there they laboured, and there they triumphed, because they worked in the spirit and power indicated by this first recorded miracle of the beggar healed at the temple gate.[1] It will be a bad day for religion and for society when the Church ceases to be the Church and champion of the weak, the down-trodden, the destitute. Here, however, lies a danger. Its work in this direction must be done in no one-sided spirit. Christianity must never adopt the language or the tone of the mere agitator. I fear that some who now pose as specially the champions of the poor are missing that spirit of mental balance and fairness which will alone enable them to be Christian champions, because seeking to do justice unto all men. It is easy enough to flatter any class, rich or poor; and it is specially tempting to do so when the class so

[1] The analogy I have drawn between the early Methodists and the Franciscans will be amply borne out if one will take the trouble, in any of our large towns, to notice where the Franciscans have left traces of their existence. The name Francis Street and the ruins of Franciscan foundations will almost always be found just outside the original walls, among the slums of the people. This point is noticed by Mr. Brewer in his interesting introduction to the *Monumenta Franciscana*, in the Rolls Series. He says, on p. xvii, "In London, York, Warwick, Oxford, Bristol, Lynn, and elsewhere, the Franciscan convents stood in the suburbs and abutted on the city walls. They made choice of the low, swampy, and undrained spots in the large towns, amongst the poorest and most neglected quarters." The Franciscans proved that splendid material structures are not necessary for great spiritual triumphs. An investigation of the topography of our older towns would show exactly the same great truth about early Methodist chapels. They were almost always placed in poor localities, as the name of Preaching Lane, often still connected with them, shows. See my *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, pp. 331-34, for more on this point.

flattered chances to hold the reins of political power. It is very hard to render to all their due, shrinking not from telling the truth, even when unpleasant, and reproving the faults of those whose side we favour. A Christianity which triumphs through appeals to popular prejudices, and seeks a mere temporary advantage by riding on the crest of popular ignorance, is not the religion taught by Christ and His Apostles.

But yet, again, the conversion of this beggar was effected through his healing; and here we see a type of the Church's future work. The Church, then, as represented by the Apostles, did not despise the body, or regard efforts after bodily blessing beneath its dignity. Spiritual work went hand in hand with healing power. This has been a lesson which Christian people, at home and abroad, have been slow enough to learn. The whole principle, for instance, of medical missions is covered by this action on the part of the Apostles. For a long time the Church thought it was its solitary duty to preach the gospel by word of mouth, and it has only been in comparatively modern days that men have learned that one of the most powerful means of preaching the gospel was the exercise of the healing art; for surely if the gift of healing, conveyed from God by supernatural means, could be an effective help towards evangelistic work, the same gift of healing, conveyed from precisely the same source by natural channels indeed, but channels none the less truly Divine, can still be effective to the same great end. The Church should count no human interest beyond its sway, and should take the keenest interest and claim a living share in every portion of life's work. At home or abroad the bodies of men are her care as well as their souls, because bodies as well as souls have been

redeemed by Jesus Christ, and both alike await their perfection and glorification through Jesus Christ. Schools, hospitals, sanitary and medical science, the dwellings and amusements of the people, trade, commerce, all should be the care of the Church, and should be based on Christ's law, and carried out on Christian principles. The Incarnation of Christ has given a deeper meaning than he ever dreamt of to the pagan poet's words,—

"Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto."

We think, furthermore, that this miracle has been divinely recorded because it was the occasion of St. Peter's testimony both to the people and to their rulers. Let us strive to realize the circumstances and the locality. Peter and John, going up to the temple, met this impotent beggar at the entrance to the Court of the Women, into which the Beautiful Gate led. Our modern notions about churches confuse all true conceptions concerning the temple. The vast majority of people, when they think of the temple, form to themselves an idea of a vast cathedral, when they ought instead to think of a large college, with square succeeding square and court following court. As Peter and John ascended the temple hill they came first to the Court of the Gentiles, which served as a market, and in which a crowd of mendicants were assembled to solicit alms. Out of this Court of the Gentiles the Beautiful Gate led into the Court of the Women, which was reserved for the ordinary religious offices of the Jewish people.[1]

[1] See Lightfoot on the Court of the Women in his *Chorography of the Holy Land*, chap. xix. in his *Works*, vol. ii., p. 29. The best modern description will be found in Count de Vogüé's *Le Temple de Jérusalem*, pp. 53-6 (Paris, 1864), with which may be compared a paper on the site

One of the beggars addressed the Apostles, soliciting a gift; whereupon the Apostles worked the miracle of healing. Upon this a crowd collected, attracted by the excited conduct of the man who had received such an unexpected blessing. They ran together after the manner of all crowds which assemble so easily and so rapidly in a city, and then, hurrying into the cloister, called Solomon's Porch, which was a remnant of the ancient temple, heard the address of St. Peter. It must have been a spot filled with cherished memories for the Apostle. Every Jew naturally venerated this cloister, because it was Solomon's; just as men in the grandest modern cathedral still love to point out the smallest relic of the original structure out of which the modern building grew. At San Clemente, in Rome, the priests delight to show the primitive structure where they say St. Clement ministered about the year A.D. 100.[1] At York the vergers will indicate far down in the crypt the fragments of the earliest Saxon church, which once stood where that splendid cathedral now rears its lofty arches. So, too, the Jews naturally cherished this link of continuity between the ancient and the modern temples. But for St. Peter this Solomon's Porch must have had special memories over and above the patriotic ideas that were linked with it. He could not forget that the very last feast of the Dedication which the Master had seen on earth, He walked in this porch, and there in His conversation with the Jews claimed an equality with the Father which led them to make an attempt on His life.

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of the Temple by Colonel Warren in the *Transactions* of the Society of Biblical Archæology, vol. vii., pp. 308-30.

[1] In the new edition of *Clement of Rome*, by Bishop Lightfoot, vol. i., pp. 92, 93, there is an account of this ancient church.

Here, then, it was that within twelve months the Apostle Peter makes a similar claim on his Master's behalf, in a discourse which extends from the twelfth to the twenty-sixth verse of the third chapter. That discourse has two distinct divisions. It sets forth, first the claims, dignity, and nature of Christ, and then makes a personal appeal to the men of Jerusalem. St. Peter begins his sermon with an act of profound self-renunciation. When the Apostle saw the people running together, he answered and said, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we made this man to walk?" The same spirit of renunciation appears at an earlier stage of the miracle. When the beggar solicited an alms, Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none: but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." One point is at once manifest when St. Peter's conduct is compared with his Master's under similar circumstances. St. Peter acts as a delegate and a servant; Jesus Christ acted as a principal, a master,—the Prince of Life, as St. Peter calls Him in the fifteenth verse of this third chapter. The distinction between the miracles of Christ and the miracles of the Apostles declares the New Testament conception of Christ's dignity and person. Compare, for instance, the narrative of the healing of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, told in the fifth chapter of St. John, with that of the healing of the impotent man laid at the temple gate. Christ said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." He made no appeal, He used no prayer, He invoked no higher name. He simply spake and it was done. The Apostle Peter, the rock-man, the leader of the apostolic band, takes the greatest care to assure the multitude that he had himself neither

power nor efficacy in this matter, and that all the power lay in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Now, leaving aside for the moment any question of the truth or reality of these two miracles, is it not manifest from these two parallel cases that the New Testament writings place Jesus Christ on an exalted standpoint far above that of any human being whatsoever; in a position, in fact, which from the boldness and magnificence of its claims can only be fitly described in the language of the Nicene Creed as "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God."

St. Peter's words teach another lesson. They are typical of the spirit which should ever animate the Christian preacher or teacher. They turn the attention of his hearers wholly away from himself, and exalt Christ Jesus alone. And such has ever been and ever must be the secret of successful preaching. Self-consciousness, in fact, injures the effect of any kind of labour. The man who does not lose himself in his work, of whatever kind—political, philanthropic, or religious—his work may be, but is ever thinking of himself and the results of his actions upon his own prospects, can never become an enthusiast; and it is only enthusiasm and enthusiastic action which can really affect mankind. And surely the preacher of Christian truth who thinks of himself rather than of the great subject of his mission, who only preaches that he may be thought clever or eloquent, debases the Christian pulpit, and must be an awful failure in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. St. Peter here, John the Baptist in still earlier days, ought to be the models for Christian teachers. Men came to the Baptist, did him homage, yielded him respect; but he pointed them from himself to Christ. He was a lamp, but Christ was the

light; and the Baptist's teaching reached its highest, noblest level when he turned his disciples' gaze away from himself, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Let me, however, not be mistaken. I do not mean to say that a Christian teacher, whether writer or speaker, should never allow a single reflex thought as to his own performances to rise in his mind, should never desire to preach ably or eloquently. A man who could set up such a standard must be ignorant of human nature and of Scripture alike. One cannot, for instance, read St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians without noting how sorely he was touched by his own unpopularity amongst them and the successful machinations of his opponents. Daily experience will prove that no attainments in the spiritual life will prevent a man from valuing the esteem and recognition of his fellow men. But such a desire to please and be successful must be kept in stern control. It must not be the great object of a Christian. It must never lead him to keep back one jot or tittle of the counsel of God. The natural desire to please must be closely watched. It easily leads men to idolatry, to the installation of human fame, power, influence, gold, in the place of that Eternal Saviour whose worship ought to be the great end and the true life of the soul.

St. Peter, after his act of abnegation and self-humiliation, then proceeds to set forth the claims and to narrate the history of Jesus Christ, and in doing so enters into the particulars of His trial and condemnation, which he charges boldly home upon his listeners, who, as distinguished from his audience on the day of Pentecost, were most probably the permanent residents in Jerusalem. The Apostle narrates the events of our

Lord's trial just as we find them in the Gospels—His interviews with Pilate, the outcry of the people, the choice and character of Barabbas. He asserts His resurrection, and implies, without asserting, His ascension, by the words, "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things." The primitive gospel of St. Peter was just like that taught by St. Paul, as he puts it forward in the fifteenth chapter of First of Corinthians, "Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I have received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again." The earliest message, proclaimed by St. Paul or St. Peter, was one and the same; it was a declaration of certain historical facts, and what it was then such it must ever remain. Whenever the historical facts are disbelieved, then men may speak beautifully of the spiritual ideas and the moral truths symbolised by Christianity, just as Hypatia and the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria could speak in picturesque language concerning the deep poetic meaning of the old pagan legends. Poetry and legends are, however, the veriest husks wherewith to support an immortal soul under the great trials of life; and when that day comes for any soul when the great historical facts set forth in the Creed are rejected, then Christianity may remain in name and appearance, but it will cease to be the gospel of joy and peace and comfort, for the human soul can only sustain itself in the supreme moments of sorrow, separation, and death by the solid realities of fact and truth.

St. Peter, again, in this sermon leaves us a type of what Christian sermons should be. He was plain spoken, yet he was tender and sympathetic. He was plain spoken. He does not hesitate to state the crimes

of the Jews in the most vigorous language. God had glorified His servant Jesus, but they delivered Him up to the agents of the idolatrous Romans; they denied Him, desired a murderer to be granted in place of the Prince of Life; urged His death when even the Roman judge would have let Him go,—and all this they had done to the long-expected and long-desired Messiah. Peter is not wanting in plainness of speech. And the Christian teacher, whether clergyman or layman, whether a pastor in the pulpit, a teacher in the Sunday-school, or the editor of a newspaper at his desk, ought to cultivate and exercise the same Christian boldness and courage. The true Christian ideal will be attained by following St. Peter's example on this occasion. He combined boldness and prudence, courage and gentleness. He spoke the truth in all honesty, but he did not adopt an attitude or use language which would arouse unnecessary opposition. What courtesy, what sympathetic, charitable politeness is manifest in St. Peter's excuse, which he offers in the course of his sermon for the Jews, rulers and people alike! "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Some men think that prudence is an idea which should never enter the head of a messenger of Christ, though no one impressed more frequently the necessity of that great virtue than did the Master, for He knew how easily imprudence may undo all the good that faithfulness might otherwise attain. Wisdom like the serpent's, gentleness like the dove's, was Christ's own rule for His Apostles. Boldness, and courage, and honesty, are blessed things, but they should be guided and moderated by charity. Earthly motives easily insinuate themselves in every man's heart, and when a man feels urged on to declare

some unpleasant truth, or to raise a violent and determined opposition, he should search diligently, lest that while he imagines himself following a heavenly vision and obeying a Divine command, he should be only yielding to mere human suggestions of pride, or partisanship, or uncharitableness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST PERSECUTION.

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. . . . And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"—ACTS iv. 1-3, 5-7.

THE fourth chapter of the Acts brings the Apostles into their first contact with the Jewish state organisation. It shows us the secret springs which led to the first persecution, typical of the fiercest that ever raged against the Church, and displays the calm conviction and moral strength by which the Apostles were sustained. The historical and local circumstances narrated by St. Luke bear all the marks of truth.

I. The miracle of healing the lame man had taken place in Solomon's porch or portico, which overlooked the Kedron valley, and was an usual resort as a promenade or public walk, specially in winter. Thus we read, in St. John x. 22, 23, that our Lord walked in Solomon's porch, and it was winter. Solomon's porch looked towards the rising sun, and was therefore a warm and

sunny spot. It was popular with the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the same reason which led the Cistercians of the Middle Ages, when building magnificent fabrics like Fountains Abbey, to place their cloister garths, where exercise was taken, on the southern side of their churches, that there they might receive and enjoy the heat and light of our winter sun.

The crowd which was collected by Peter soon attracted the attention of the temple authorities, who had a regular police under their control. The Jews were permitted by the Romans to exercise the most unlimited freedom within the bounds of the temple to secure its sanctity. In ordinary cases the Romans reserved to themselves the power of capital punishment, but in the case of the temple and its profanation they allowed it to the Sanhedrin.

An interesting proof of this fact has come to light of late years, attesting, in a most striking manner, the accuracy of the Acts of the Apostles. Josephus, in his *Antiquities* (xv. xi. 5), when describing the Holy Place, tells us that the royal cloisters of the temple had three walks, formed by four rows of pillars, with which they were adorned. The outermost walk was open to all, but the central walk was cut off by a stone wall, on which were inscriptions forbidding foreigners—that is, Gentiles—to enter under pain of death. Now in the twenty-first chapter of the Acts we read that a supposed breach of this law was the occasion of the riot against St. Paul, wherein he narrowly escaped death.[1]

[1] "Moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple" (Acts xxi. 28, 29).

The Jews were actually about to kill St. Paul when the soldiers came upon them. To this fact, Tertullus the orator, when speaking before the governor Felix, alludes, and that without rebuke, saying of St. Paul, "Whom we took, and would have judged according to our law."[1] Here comes in our illustration of the Acts derived from modern archæological research. Some few years ago there was discovered at Jerusalem, and there is now laid up in the Sultan's Museum at Constantinople, a sculptured and inscribed stone, containing one of these very Greek notices upon which the Apostles must have looked, warning Gentiles not to enter within the sacred bounds, and denouncing against transgressors the penalty of death which the Jews sought to inflict upon St. Paul.[2] Now it was just the same about the other details of the temple worship. Inside the sacred area the Jewish law was supreme, and Jewish penalties were enacted. In order, therefore, that the temple might be duly protected the priests watched in three places, and the Levites in twenty-one places, in addition to all their other duties connected with the offering of the sacrifices and the details of public worship. These guards discharged the duties of a sacred or temple police, and their captain was called the captain of the temple, or, as he is denominated in the Talmud, "The ruler of the mountain of the House."

Much confusion has, indeed, arisen concerning this

[1] Acts xxiv. 6.

[2] I have never seen a notice of this interesting biblical discovery in any English magazine or journal. There is an account of it in the *Revue Archéologique* for 1885, series iii., t. v., p. 241, by Clermont-Ganneau, its original discoverer. He calls it an authentic page of the New Testament.

official. He has been confounded, for instance, with the captain of the neighbouring fortress of Antonia. The Romans had erected a strong square castle, with lofty walls, and towers at the four corners, just north of the temple, and connected with it by a covered way. One of these flanking towers was one hundred and five feet high, and overlooked all the temple area, so that when a riot began the soldiers could hurry to quell it. The captain of the garrison which held this tower is called, in our version, the chief captain, or, more properly, the chiliarch, or colonel of a regiment, as we should put it in modern phraseology. But this official had nothing whatever to say to questions of Jewish law or ritual. He was simply responsible for the peace of Jerusalem; he represented the governor, who lived at Cæsarea, and had no concern with the disputes which might arise amongst the Jews. But it was quite otherwise with the captain of the temple. He was a Jewish official, took cognisance of Jewish disputes, and was responsible in matters of Jewish discipline which Roman law respected and upheld, but in which it did not interfere. This purely Jewish official, a priest by profession, appointed by the Jewish authorities, and responsible to them alone, appears prominently on three distinct occasions. In the twenty-second of St. Luke's Gospel we have the account of the betrayal by the traitor Judas. When he was meditating that action he went first to the chief priests and the captains to consult with them. A Roman commander, an Italian, a Gaul, or possibly even a Briton,—as he might have been, for the Romans were accustomed to bring their Western legionaries into the East, as in turn they garrisoned Britain with the men of Syria,—would have cared very little whether a Galilean teacher was arrested or not.

But it was quite natural that a Jewish and a temple official should have been interested in this question. While again on this occasion, and once more upon the arrest of the Apostles after the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the captain of the temple appears as one of the highest Jewish officials.[1]

II. We see too the secret source whence the opposition to apostolic teaching arose. The priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them. The captain was roused into action by the Sadducees, who were mingled in the crowd, and heard the words of the Apostles proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus Christ, "being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." It is noteworthy how perpetually the Sadducees appear as the special antagonists of Christianity during these earliest years. Our Lord's denunciations of the Pharisees were so often repeated that we are apt to think of them as the leading opponents of Christianity during the apostolic age. And yet this is a mistake. There was an important difference between the Master's teaching and that of His disciples, which accounts for the changed character of the opposition. Our Lord's teaching came specially into conflict with the Pharisees and their mode of thought. He denounced mere external worship, and asserted the spiritual and inner character of true religion. That was the great staple of his message. The Apostles, on the other hand, testified and enforced above everything else the risen, the glorified, and the continuous existence in the spirit world of the Man Christ Jesus. And thus they came into conflict with

[1] See more on this point in Dr. John Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, Luke xxii. 4 and Acts iv.

the central doctrine of Sadduceism which denied a future life. Hence at Jerusalem, at least, the Sadducees were ever the chief persecutors of the Apostles, while the Pharisees were favourable to Christianity, or at least neutral. At the meeting of the Sanhedrin of which we read in the fifth chapter, Gamaliel, a Pharisee, proposes the discharge of the imprisoned Apostles. In the twenty-third chapter, when St. Paul is placed before the same Sanhedrin the Pharisees take his side, while the Sadducees are his bitter opponents. We never read of a Sadducee embracing Christianity; while St. Paul, the greatest champion of the gospel, was gained from the ranks of the Pharisees. This fact sheds light on the character of the apostolic teaching. It was not any system of evanescent Christianity; it was not a system of mere ethical teaching; it was not a system where the facts of Christ's life were whittled away, where, for instance, His resurrection was explained as a mere symbolical idea, typifying the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin to the life of holiness; for in that case the Sadducees would not have troubled themselves on this occasion to oppose such teaching. But apostolic Christianity was a system which based itself on a risen Saviour, and involved, as its fundamental ideas, the doctrines of a future life and of a spiritual world, and of a resurrection where body and soul would be again united.

Some strange representations have been from time to time put forward as to the nature of apostolic and specially of Pauline Christianity, but one of the strangest is what we may call the Matthew Arnold theory, which makes the apostolic teaching a poor, emasculated thing, devoid of any real foundation of historical fact. If Chris-

tianity, as proclaimed by St. Peter and St. Paul, was of this type, why, we ask, was it so bitterly opposed by the Sadducees? They at any rate understood the Apostles to teach and preach a Jesus Christ literally risen from the dead and ascended in the truth of human nature into that spiritual and unseen world whose existence they denied. For the Sadducees were materialists pure and simple. As such they prevailed among the rich. The poor, then as ever, furnished very few adherents to a creed which may satisfy persons who are enjoying the good things of this life. It has very few attractions, however, for those with whom life is dealing hardly, and to whom the world presents itself in a stern aspect alone. It is no wonder the new teaching concerning a risen Messiah should have excited the hatred of the rich Sadducees, and should have been welcomed by the poorer classes, among whom the Pharisees had their followers. The system of the Sadducees was a religion indeed. It satisfied a want, for man can never do without some kind of a religion. It recognised God and His revelation to Moses. It asserted, however, that the Mosaic revelation contained nothing concerning a future life, or the doctrine of immortality. It was a religion, therefore, without fear of a future, and which could never indeed excite any enthusiasm, but was very satisfactory and agreeable for the prosperous few as long as they were in prosperity and in health. Peter and John came preaching a very disturbing doctrine to this class of people. If Peter's view of life was right, theirs was all wrong. It was no wonder that the Sadducees brought upon them the priests and the captain of the temple, and summoned the Sanhedrin to deal with them. We should have done the same had we been in their

position. In every age, indeed, the bitterest persecutors of Christianity have been men like the Sadducees. It has often been said that persecution on the part of a sceptic or of an unbeliever is illogical. The Sadducees were unbelievers as regards a future life. What matter to them was it, then, if the Apostles preached a future life, and convinced the people of its truth? But logic is always pushed impetuously aside when it comes in contact with deep-rooted human feeling, and the Sadducees instinctively felt that the conflict between themselves and the Apostles was a deadly one; one or other party must perish. And so it was under the Roman empire. The ruling classes of the empire were essentially infidel, or, to use a modern term, we should rather perhaps style them agnostic. They regarded the Christian teaching as a noxious enthusiasm. They could not understand why Christians should not offer incense to the deity of the emperor, or perform any act of idolatry which was commanded by state law, and regarded their refusal as an act of treason. They had no idea of conscience, because they were essentially like the Sadducees.[1] So was it again in the days of the first French Revolution, and so we find it still. The men who reject all spiritual existence, and hold a Sadducean creed, fear the power of Christian enthusiasm and Christian love, and had they only the

[1] Pliny in his *Letters*, x., 97, writes to the Emperor Trajan expressing this view when telling how he dealt with the Christians of Bithynia: "I asked them whether they were Christians: if they admitted it, I repeated the question twice, and threatened them with punishment; if they persisted, I ordered them to be at once punished: for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction." A philosopher could not understand a man keeping a conscience in opposition to the law. The martyrs vindicated the freedom of the Christian conscience.

power would crush it as sternly and remorselessly as the Sadducees desired to do in apostolic times, or as the Roman emperors did from the days of Nero to those of Diocletian.

III. The Apostles were arrested in the evening and put in prison. The temple had an abundance of chambers and apartments which could be used as prisons, or, as the Sanhedrin were accustomed to sit in a basilica erected in the court outside the Beautiful Gate, and inside Solomon's porch or cloister, there was probably a cell for prisoners connected with it. The next morning St. Peter and St. John were brought up before the court which met daily in this basilica, immediately after the hour of the morning sacrifices. We can realize the scene, for the persons mentioned as having taken part in the trial are historical characters. The Sanhedrin sat in a semicircle, with the president in the centre, while opposite were three benches for the scholars of the Sanhedrists, who thus practically learned law. The Sanhedrin, when complete, consisted of seventy-one members, comprising chief priests, the elders of the people, and the most renowned of the rabbis; but twenty-three formed a quorum competent to transact business.[1] The high priest when present, as Annas and Caiaphas both were on this occasion, naturally exercised great influence, though he was not necessarily president of the council. The sacred writer has been accused, indeed, of a historical mistake, both

[1] It would take more space than we can now afford to explain the constitution of the Sanhedrin. There is an admirable and concise article on the subject in Schaff's edition of Herzog's *Cyclopædia*, and another in Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopædia*. Dr. John Lightfoot describes it in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, which we so often quote. The most extensive and minute account of it will, however, be found in Latin in Selden's treatise *De Synedriis*, illustrated with plates.

here and in his Gospel (iii. 2), in making Annas high priest when Caiaphas was actually occupying that office, Annas, his father-in-law, having been previously deposed by the Romans. St. Luke seems to me, on the other hand, thus to prove his strict accuracy. Caiaphas was of course the legal high priest so far as the Romans were concerned. They recognised him as such, and delivered to him the high priest's official robes, when necessary for the fulfilment of his great office, keeping them safe at other times in the tower of Antonia. But then, as I have already said, so long as the Roman law and constitutions were observed on great state occasions, they allowed the Jews a large amount of Home Rule in the management of their domestic religious concerns, and were not keen in marking offences, if only the offences were not thrust into public notice. Annas was recognised by the Sanhedrin and by the Jews at large as the true high priest, Caiaphas as the legal or official one; and they kept themselves on the safe side, as far as the Romans were concerned, by uniting them in their official consultations in the Sanhedrin. The Sadducees, doubtless, on this occasion made every effort that their own party should attend the council meeting, feeling the importance of crushing the rising sect in the very bud. We read, therefore, that with the high priest came "John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest."[1]

[1] Dr. John Lightfoot, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, chap. iv., verse 6, identifies John mentioned in this passage with Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, the priest who lived till after the destruction of Jerusalem, and prophesied of that event forty years before it occurred. He was, however, a Pharisee, though the vast majority of the priests were Sadducees. Lightfoot tells the following story of him from the ancient Jewish books: "Forty years before the destruction of the city, when the gates of the

The priestly families were at this period the aristocracy of the Jews, and they all belonged to the Sadducees, in opposition to the democracy who favoured the Pharisees. These latter, indeed, had their own representatives in the Sanhedrin, as we shall see on a later occasion,—men of light and leading, like Gamaliel; but the permanent officials of the Jewish senate were for the most part Sadducees, and we know how easily the permanent officials can pack a popular body, such as the Sanhedrin was, with their own adherents, when any special end is to be attained.

It was before such a hostile audience that the Apostles were now called to witness, and here they first proved the power of the Divine words, "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak."[1] St. Peter threw himself upon God, and found that his trust was not in vain. He was at the moment of need filled with the Holy Ghost, and enabled to testify with a power which defeated his determined foes. He had a special promise from the Master, and he acted upon it. But we must observe that this promise was a special one, limited to the Apostles and to those in every age placed in similar circumstances. This promise is no general one. It was given to the Apostles to free them from care, anxiety, and forethought as to the matter and form of the addresses which they

temple flew open of their own accord, Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai said, O Temple, Temple, why dost thou disturb thyself? I know thy end, that thou shalt be destroyed, for so the prophet Zechary hath spoken concerning thee, Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedar." He lived to be one hundred and twenty years old. He was permitted by Titus to remove the Sanhedrin to Jabneh on the destruction of the city, where he presided over it.

[1] St. Matt. x. 19.

should deliver when suddenly called to speak before assemblies like the Sanhedrin. Under such circumstances they would have no time to prepare speeches suitable for ears trained in all the arts of oratory as then practised amongst the ancients, whether Jews or Gentiles. So their Master gave them an assurance of strength and skill such as none of their adversaries could equal or resist. "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." This promise has been, however, misunderstood and abused when applied to ordinary circumstances. It was good for the Apostles, and it is good for Christian men placed under similar conditions, persecuted for the sake of their testimony, and deprived of the ordinary means of preparation. But it is not a promise authorising Christian teachers, clerical or lay, to dispense with careful thought and industrious study when communicating the truths of Christianity, or applying the great principles contained in the Bible to the manifold circumstances of modern life. Christ certainly told the Apostles not to premeditate beforehand what they should say. When relying, however, upon the promises of God, we should carefully seek to ascertain how far they are limited, and how far they apply to ourselves; else we may be putting our trust in words upon which we have no right to depend. A presumptuous trust is next door to an act of rebellion, and has often led to unbelief. Our Lord said to the Apostles, "Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses," because He would provide for them; but He did not say so to us, and if we go out into life presumptuously relying upon a passage of Scripture that does not belong to us, unbelief may overtake us as a strong man armed when we find ourselves disappointed.

And so, too, with this promise of supernatural guidance which the Apostles enjoyed, and which saints of every age have proved true when placed in similar circumstances; it is a special one for them, it does not apply to us. Christian teachers, whether in the pulpit, or the Sunday school, or the home circle, must still depend as completely as the Apostles did upon the Holy Ghost as the source of all successful teaching. But in the case of the Apostles the inspiration was immediate and direct. In the case of ordinary Christians like ourselves placed amid all the helps which God's providence gives, we must use study, thought, meditation, prayer, experience of life, as channels through which the same inspiration is conveyed to us. The Society of Friends, when George Fox established it, testified on behalf of a great truth when it asserted that the Holy Ghost dwelt still, as in apostolic times, in the whole body of the Church, and spake still through the experience of Christian people. Their testimony was a great truth and a much-needed one in the middle of the seventeenth century, when Churchmen were in danger of turning religion into a great machine of state police, such as the Greek Church became under the earlier Christian emperors, and when Puritans were inclined to smother all religious enthusiasm beneath their intense zeal for cold, rigid scholastic dogmas and confessions of faith. The early Friends came proclaiming a Divine power still present, a Church of God still energised and inspired as of old, and it was a revelation for many an earnest soul. But they made a great mistake, and pushed a great truth to a pernicious extreme, when they taught that this inspiration was inconsistent with forethought and study on the part of their teachers as to the substance and character of their public ministrations. The Society of

Friends teaches that men should speak forth to their assemblies just what the Holy Ghost reveals on the spot, without any effort on their own part, such as meditation and study involve. They have acted without a promise, and they have fared accordingly. That Society has been noted for its philanthropy, for the peaceful, gentle lives of its members; but it has not been noted for expository power, and its public teachers have held but a low place among those well-instructed scribes who bring forth out of God's treasures things new and old.[1]

Expositors of Scripture, teachers of Divine truth, whether in the public congregation or in a Sunday-school class, must prepare themselves by thought, study, and prayer; then, having made the way of the Lord clear, and removed the hindrances which barred His path, we may humbly trust that the Holy Ghost will speak by us and through us, because we honour Him by our self-denial, and cease to offer burnt sacrifices unto the Lord of that which costs us nothing.[2]

[1] The decay in the numbers of the Society of Friends may be traced to several causes. The Society has done its work. Its testimony has borne its appointed fruit, and, like other systems which have sufficiently acted their part, it is passing away. One of the most evident causes of its decline is the decay of preaching consequent upon their notion of immediate inspiration. The advance of general education has told on their members, who cannot endure the unprepared and undigested expositions which satisfied their fathers. The decay in the preaching power of the Evangelical party in the Church of England may, in many cases, be traced to much the same source. No Church or society can now hope to retain the allegiance of its educated members which does not recognise that the help of the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed through the ordinary channels of study and meditation.

[2] As a Sunday school teacher for more than thirty years I feel bound to say that half the teaching in Sunday schools is useless from want of preparation on the part of teachers. A large proportion of them never

IV. The address of St. Peter to the Sanhedrin is marked by the same characteristics as we find in those directed to the people. It is kindly, for though the Apostles could speak sternly and severely just as their Master did at times, yet they have left in this special direction an example to public speakers and public teachers of truth in every age. They strove first of all to put themselves in sympathy as much as possible with their audience. They did not despise the art of the rhetorician which teaches a speaker to begin by conciliating the good feelings of his audience towards himself. To the people St. Peter began, "Ye men of Israel;" he recognises their cherished privileges, as well as their sacred memories,—"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers." To the bitterly hostile audience of the Sanhedrin, where the Sadducees largely predominated, Peter's exordium is profoundly respectful and courteous, "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel." The Apostles and the earliest Evangelists did not despise human feelings or outrage human sentiment when setting out to preach Christ crucified. We have known men so wrong-headed that they were never happy unless their efforts to do good or spread their peculiar opinions eventuated in a riot. When evangelistic work or any kind of attempt to spread opinions evokes violent opposition, that very opposition

think of opening their Bibles beforehand and studying the appointed lessons, jotting down a number of leading questions to assist their memories. The result is, that after a few questions suggested by the text, the teacher turns to read a story or indulge in gossip with his pupils. A well-prepared teacher will never find an hour too long for the work appointed. I have already said something on pp. 131, 132, above, upon this subject, which is an extremely important and practical one.

often arises from the injudicious conduct of the promoters; and then when the opposition is once evoked or a riot caused, charity departs, passion and violent feelings are aroused, and all hope of good evaporates for the time. There was profound practical wisdom in that command of our Lord to His Apostles, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," even taking the matter only from the standpoint of a man anxious to spread his peculiar sentiments.

The Apostle's address was kindly, but it was plain-spoken. The Sanhedrin were sitting as a board of inquisitors. They did not deny the miracle which had been wrought. We are scarcely fit judges of the attitude of mind occupied by an Eastern, specially by an Eastern Jew of those earlier ages, when confronted with a miracle. He did not deny the facts brought under his notice. He was too well acquainted with magic and the strange performances of its professors to do so. He merely inquired as to the sources of the power, whether they were Divine or diabolical. "By what power or by what name have ye done this?" was a very natural inquiry in the mouth of an ecclesiastical body such as the Sanhedrin was. It was disturbed by facts, for which no explanation such as their philosophy furnished could account. It was upset in its calculations just as, to this day, the performances of Indian jugglers or the weird wonders of hypnotism upset the calculations of the hard, narrow man who has restricted all his investigations to some one special branch of science, and has so contracted his horizon that he thinks there is nothing in heaven or in earth which his philosophy cannot explain. We should mark the expression, "By what *name* have ye done this?" for it gives us a

glimpse into Jewish life and practice. The Jews were accustomed in their incantations to use several kinds of names; sometimes those of the patriarchs, sometimes the name of Solomon, and sometimes that of the Eternal Jehovah Himself. Of late years vast quantities of Jewish and Gnostic manuscripts have come to light in Egypt and Syria containing various titles and forms used by the Jewish magicians and the earlier Christian heretics, who were largely imbued with Jewish notions. It is quite in keeping with what we know of the spirit of the age from other sources that the Sanhedrin should ask, "By what power or by what name have ye done this?" While again, when we turn to the book of the Acts of the Apostles itself we find an illustration of the council's inquiry in the celebrated case of the seven sons of Sceva, the Jewish priest at Ephesus, who strove to use for their own magical purposes the Divine name of Jesus Christ, and suffered for their temerity. St. Peter's reply to the question of the court proves that the Christian Church adopted in all its Divine offices, whether in the working of miracles then or of baptism and of ordination, as still, the invocation of the Sacred Name, after the Jewish model. The Church still baptizes and ordains in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Christ Himself had adopted the formula for baptism, and the Church has extended it to ordination, pleading thus before God and man alike the Divine power by which alone St. Peter healed the cripple and the Church sends forth its ministers to carry on Christ's work in the world.

St. Peter's address was, as we have already said, very kindly, but very bold and plain-spoken in setting forth the power of Christ's name. He had learnt by his Jewish training the tremendous importance and

solemnity of names. Moses at the bush would know God's name before he went as His messenger to the captive Israelites. On Sinai God Himself had placed reverence towards His name as one of the fundamental truths of religion. Prophet and psalmist had conspired together to teach St. Peter that holy and reverend was the name of God, and to impress upon him thus the power and meaning which lies in Christ's name, and indeed in all names, though names are things we count so trifling. St. Peter dwells upon this point all through his addresses. To the people he had said, "His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong." To the rulers it was the same. It was "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, this man doth stand here before you whole." "There is none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved." The Sanhedrin understand the importance of this point, and tell the Apostles they must not teach in this name. St. Peter pointedly refuses, and prays, when come to his own company, "that wonders may be done through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus."

St. Peter realized the sanctity and the power of God's name, whether revealed in its ancient form of Jehovah or its New Testament form of Jesus Christ. Well would it be if the same Divine reverence found a larger place amongst ourselves. Irreverence towards the sacred name is far too prevalent; and even when men do not use God's name in a profane way, there is too much lightness in the manner in which even religious men permit themselves to utter that name which is the expression to man of supreme holiness,—"God bless us," "Lord help us and save." How constantly do even pious people garnish their conversations and their

epistles with such phrases or with the symbols D.V., without any real feeling that they are thereby appealing to Him who was and is and is to come, the Eternal. The name of God is still holy as of old, and the name of Jesus is still powerful to calm and soothe and bless as of old, and Christian people should sanctify those great names in their conversation with the world.[1]

St. Peter was bold because he was daily comprehending more and more of the meaning of Christ's work and mission, was gaining a clearer insight into the dignity of His person, and was experiencing in himself the truth of His supernatural promises. How could a man help being bold, who felt the Spirit's power within, and really held with intense belief that there was salvation in none other save Christ? Personal experience of religion alone can impart strength and courage and boldness to endure, to suffer, and to testify. St. Peter was exclusive in his views. He would not have suited those easy-going souls who now think one religion just as good as another, and consequently do not regard it as of the slightest moment whether a man be a follower of Christ or of Mahomet. The earliest Christians had none of this diluted faith. They believed that as there was only one God, so there was only one Mediator between God and man, and they realized the tremendous importance of preaching this Mediator. The Apostles,

[1] The primitive Christians had a profound reverence for the names of our Saviour, which they delighted to depict in different ways, some of them so secret as to defy the curiosity of the pagans. They used the symbol I.H.S., which I have known to arouse the susceptibilities of suspicious Protestants, though nothing but a Latin or Western adaptation of the three first letters of the Greek word ΙΗΣΟΥΣ written in capitals. The fish, again, was a favourite symbol, because each letter of the Greek word *ἰχθύς* stood for a different title of our Lord, *Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, Θεός, Υἱός, Σωτήρ*, or Jesus, Christ, God, Son, Saviour.

however, must be cleared from a misconstruction under which they have at times suffered. St. Peter proclaims Christ to the Sanhedrin as the only means of salvation. In his address to Cornelius the centurion of Cæsarea, he declares that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. These passages and these two declarations appear inconsistent. Their inconsistency is only superficial, however, as Bishop Burnet has well explained in his exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, a book not read very much in these times.[1] St. Peter taught exclusive salvation through Christ. Christ is the only means, the only channel and way by which God confers salvation. Christ's work is the one meritorious cause which gains spiritual blessing for man. But then, while there is salvation only in Christ, many persons may be saved by Christ who know not of Him consciously, else what shall we say or think about infants and idiots? It is only by Christ and through Christ and for His sake that any soul can be saved. He is the only door of salvation, He is the way as well as the truth and the life. But then it is not for us to pronounce how far the saving merits of Christ may be applied and His saving power extend. St. Peter knew and taught that Jesus Christ was the one Mediator, and that by His name alone salvation could be obtained. Yet he did not hesitate to declare as regards Cornelius the centurion, that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. It ought to be sufficient for us, as it was for the Apostles, to believe that the knowledge of Christ is life eternal, while satisfied to leave all other problems in the hands of Eternal Love.

[1] See Burnet's exposition of the eighteenth Article in his commentary on the Thirty-Nine Articles.

CHAPTER X.

THE COMMUNITY OF GOODS.

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."—ACTS iv. 32-5.

THE community of goods and its results next claim our attention in the course of this sacred record of primitive Church life. The gift of tongues and this earliest attempt at Christian communism were the two special features of apostolic, or perhaps we should rather say of Jerusalem, Christianity. The gift of tongues we find at one or two other places, at Cæsarea on the first conversion of the Gentiles, at Ephesus and at Corinth. It then disappeared. The community of goods was tried at Jerusalem. It lasted there a very short time, and then faded from the ordinary practice of the Christian Church. The record of this vain attempt and its manifold results embodies many a lesson suitable to our modern Christianity.

I. The book of the Acts of the Apostles in its earliest

chapters relates the story of the triumph of the Cross; it also tells of the mistakes made by its adherents. The Scriptures prove their Divine origin, and display the secret inspiration and guidance of their writers, by their thorough impartiality. If in the Old Testament they are depicting the history of an Abraham or of a David, they do not, after the example of human biographies, tell of their virtues and throw the mantle of obscurity over their vices and crimes. If in the New Testament they are relating the story of apostolic labours, they record the bad as well as the good, and hesitate not to tell of the dissimulation of St. Peter, the hot temper and the bitter disputes of a Paul and a Barnabas.

It is a notable circumstance that, in ancient and modern times alike, men have stumbled at this sacred impartiality. They have mistaken the nature of inspiration, and have busied themselves to clear the character of men like David and the holy Apostles, explaining away the plainest facts,—the lie of Abraham, the adultery of David, the weaknesses and infirmities of the Apostles. They have forgotten the principle involved in the declaration, "Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves;" and have been so jealous for the honour of scriptural characters that they have made their history unreal, worthless as a living example. St. Jerome, to take but one instance, was a commentator upon Scripture whose expositions are of the greatest value, specially because he lived and worked amid the scenes where Scripture history was written, and while yet living tradition could be used to illustrate the sacred narrative. St. Jerome applied this deceptive method to the dissimulation of St. Peter at Antioch of which St. Paul tells us in the Galatians:

maintaining, in opposition to St. Augustine,[1] that St. Peter was not a dissembler at all, and that the whole scene at Antioch was a piece of pious acting, got up between the Apostles in order that St. Paul might have the opportunity of condemning Judaizing practices. This is an illustration of the tendency to which I am referring. Men will uphold, not merely the character of the Scriptures, but the characters of the writers of Scripture. Yet how clearly do the Sacred Writings distinguish between these things; how clearly they show that God imparted His treasures in earthen vessels, vessels that were sometimes very earthy indeed, for while in one place they give us the Psalms of David, with all their treasures of spiritual joy, hope, penitence, they in another place give us the very words of the letter written by King David ordering the murder of Uriah the Hittite. This jealousy, which refuses to admit the fallibility and weakness of scriptural personages, has been applied to the doctrine of the community of goods which finds place in the passage under review. Some expositors will not allow that it was a mistake at all, they view the Church at Jerusalem as divinely guided by the Holy Spirit even in matters of temporal policy; they ascribe to it an infallibility greater and wider than any claimed for the Roman Pontiff. He claims infallibility in matters pertaining to faith and morals, when speaking as universal doctor and teacher of the Universal Church; but those writers invest the Church at Jerusalem with infallibility on every question, whether spiritual or temporal, sacred or secular, because the Holy Ghost had been poured

[1] See an interesting letter from St. Augustine to St. Jerome on this question in the *Letters* of St. Augustine (Clark's edition), vol. i., pp. 30-2. With which compare Bishop Lightfoot on *Galatians*, p. 128.

out upon the twelve Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Now it is quite evident that neither the Church of Jerusalem nor the Apostles themselves were guided by an inspiration which rendered them infallible upon all questions. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit which was granted to them was a gift which left all their faculties in precisely the same state as they were before the descent of the Spirit. The Apostles could make moral mistakes, as Peter did at Antioch; they were not infallible in forecasting the future, as St. Paul proved when at Ephesus he told the Ephesian elders that he should not again visit their Church,[1] while, indeed, he spent much time there in after years. The whole early Church was mistaken on the important questions of the calling of the Gentiles, the binding nature of the Levitical law, and the time of Christ's second coming. The Church of Jerusalem, till the conversion of Cornelius, was completely mistaken as to the true nature of the Christian dispensation. They regarded it, not as the new and final revelation which was to supersede all others; they thought of it merely as a new sect within the bounds of Judaism.

It was a similar mistake which led to the community of goods. We can trace the genesis and upgrowth of the idea. It cannot be denied that the earliest Christians expected the immediate return of Christ. This expectation brought with it a very natural paralysis of business life and activity. We have seen the same

[1] *Cf.* Acts xx. 25; 1 Tim. i. 3, iii. 14, iv. 13; 2 Tim. i. 18. St. Paul's address to the Ephesian elder was delivered in the spring of 58 A.D. He twice revisited Ephesus, six years later, in 64 A.D. See Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, pp. 314, 334,—a book of marvellous learning and research, which every critical student of the Acts should possess, together with the same author's *Life of St. Paul*.

result happening again and again. At Thessalonica St. Paul had to deal with it, as we have already noted in the second of these lectures. Some of the Thessalonians laboured under a misunderstanding as to St. Paul's true teaching: they thought that Jesus Christ was immediately about to appear, and they gave up work and labour under the pretence of preparing for His second coming. Then St. Paul comes sharply down upon this false practical deduction which they had drawn from his teaching, and proclaims the law, "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." We have already spoken of the danger which might attend such a time. Here we behold another danger which did practically ensue and bring forth evil fruit. The first Christian Pentecost and the days succeeding it were a period of strained expectation, a season of intense religious excitement, which naturally led to the community of goods. There was no apostolic rule or law laid down in the matter. It seems to have been a course of action to which the converts spontaneously resorted, as the logical deduction from two principles which they held; first, their brotherhood and union in Christ; secondly, the nearness of Christ's second advent. The time was short. The Master had passed into the invisible world whence He would shortly reappear. Why should they not then, as brethren in Christ, have one common purse, and spend the whole time in waiting and watching for that loved presence? This seems a natural explanation of the origin of a line of policy which has been often appealed to in the practical life of modern Europe as an example for modern Christians; and yet, when we examine it more closely, we can see that this book of the Acts of the Apostles, while it tells of their mistake, carries with it the correction of

the error into which these earliest disciples fell.[1] The community of goods was adopted in no other Church. At Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, we hear nothing of it in those primitive times. No Christian sect or Church has ever tried to revive it, save the monastic orders, who adopted it for the special purpose of completely cutting their members off from any connection with the world of life and action; and, in later times still, the wild fanatical Anabaptists at the Reformation period, who thought, like the Christians of Jerusalem, that the kingdom of God, as they fancied it, was immediately about to appear.[2] The Church of Jerusalem, as

[1] The communism of the early Christians was not a novel notion. The Essenes, a curious Jewish sect of that time, had long practised it; see Bishop Lightfoot's essay on the Essenes in his commentary on Colossians, 3rd ed., p. 416. Josephus, in his *Antiqq.*, XVIII., i., 5, and in his *Wars*, II., viii., 3, describes the communism of the Essenes in language that would exactly apply to that of the early Christians. Thus in the latter place he says: "These men are despisers of riches, and so very communicative as raises our admiration. Nor is there to be found any one among them who hath more than another; for it is a law among them, that those who come to them must let what they have be common to the whole order; insomuch that among them all there is no appearance of poverty or excess of riches, but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions, and so there is, as it were, one patrimony among all the brethren."

[2] The thirty-eighth Article of the Church of England is directed against the Anabaptist theory. A paralysis of ordinary life and action was temporarily produced at Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost. This quickly led to the community of goods, with its evil results. The paralysis produced at Jerusalem by the excitement and expectation of those early days was reproduced in this century at the time when Irvingism and Plymouthism took their first rise, some sixty years ago. The best illustration of the practical effects of such one-sided spiritual expectation will be found in a book forgotten by this generation, *The Letters and Papers of Lady Powerscourt*, published in 1838. She was eminent in the religious world of her day, and was intimately mixed up with the prophetical movement out of which Irvingism and Plymouthism were developed. The fundamental doctrine of both these sects was the

the apostolic history shows us, reaped the natural results of this false step. They adopted the principles of communism; they lost hold of that principle of individual life and exertion which lies at the very root of all civilisation and all advancement, and they fell, as the natural result, into the direst poverty. There was no reason in the nature of its composition why the Jerusalem Church should have been more poverty-stricken than the Churches of Ephesus, Philippi, or Corinth. Slaves and very humble folk constituted the staple of these Churches. At Jerusalem a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, and the priests were, as a class, in easy circumstances. Slaves cannot at Jerusalem have constituted that large element of the Church which they did in the great Greek and Roman cities, simply because slavery never reached among the Jews the same development as in the Gentile

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immediate personal appearance and reign of Christ on earth. Lady Powerscourt's correspondence shows the results on an ardent mind of such an idea. She gave up society, separated herself from the world in a hermit's cottage at Lough Bray in the deepest recesses of the Wicklow Mountains, and there occupied herself in writing to her friends exhortations to cease from life's work, such as the following, which we find on p. 235: "There is much seemingly to be said for the things of this world being sanctified to heavenly uses; yet I cannot help feeling more and more assured every day that a divorce must take place,—that God and the world cannot be joined,—that it behoves us to make plain that we are the risen ones by our portion not being in any degree from hence,—that we are not struggling upwards through mire and dirt, but we are as let down from heaven. We take our stand in the kingdom of heaven, looking from above at earth, not from earth at heaven." When people begin to "look from above at earth," the step to communism is not a long one. Vast numbers of persons never recovered themselves from the strain of that time (A. D. 1830), but remained all their lives in a state of dreamy disappointment. I have enlarged on this subject in an article on J. N. Darby in the *Contemporary Review* for 1885.

world. The Jews, as a nation, were a people among whom there was a widely diffused comfort, and the earliest Church at Jerusalem must have fairly represented the nation. There was nothing to make the mother Church of Christendom that pauper community we find it to have been all through St. Paul's ministry, save the one initial mistake, which doubtless the Church authorities found it very hard afterwards to retrieve; for when men get into the habit of living upon alms it is very difficult to restore the habits of healthy independence.

II. This incident is, however, rich in teaching for the Church of every age, and that in very various directions. It is a significant warning for the mission field. Missionary Churches should strive after a healthy independence amongst their members. It is, of course, absolutely necessary that missionaries should strive to supply temporal employment to their converts in places and under circumstances where a profession of Christianity cuts them off at once from all communication with their old friends and neighbours. The primitive Church found it necessary to give such temporal relief, and yet had to guard against its abuse; and we have been far too remiss in looking for guidance to those early centuries when the whole Church was necessarily one great missionary organization. The Apostolic Canons and Constitutions are documents which throw much light on many questions which now press for solution in the mission field. They pretend to be the exact words of the Apostles, but are evidently the work of a later age. They date back in their present shape, at latest, to the third or fourth centuries, as is evident from the fact that they contain elaborate rules for the treatment of martyrs and confessors,—and there were no martyrs after that time,—directing that

every effort should be made to render them comfort, support, and sympathy. These Constitutions prove that the Church in the third century was one mighty co-operative institution, and an important function of the bishop was the direction of that co-operation. The second chapter of the fourth book of the Apostolic Constitution lays down, "Do you therefore, O bishops, be solicitous about the maintenance of orphans, being in nothing wanting to them; exhibiting to the orphans the care of parents; to the widows the care of husbands; to the artificer, work; to the stranger, an house; to the hungry, food; to the thirsty, drink; to the naked, clothing; to the sick, visitation; to the prisoners, assistance." But these same Constitutions recognise equally clearly the danger involved in such a course. The wisdom of the early Church saw and knew how easily alms promiscuously bestowed sap the roots of independence, and taught therefore, with equal explicitness, the absolute necessity for individual exertion, the duty of Christian toil and labour; urging the example of the Apostles themselves, as in the sixty-third Constitution of the second book, where they are represented as exhorting, "Let the young persons of the Church endeavour to minister diligently in all necessaries; mind your business with all becoming seriousness, that so you may always have sufficient to support yourselves and those that are needy, and not burden the Church of God. For we ourselves, besides our attention to the Word of the Gospel, do not neglect our inferior employments; for some of us are fishermen, some tent-makers, some husbandmen, that so we may never be idle." In the modern mission field there will often be occasions when, as in ancient times, the profession of Christianity and the submission of

the converts to baptism will involve the loss of all things.[1] And, under such circumstances, Christian love, such as burned of old in the hearts of God's people and led them to enact the rules we have now quoted, will still lead and compel the Church in its organized capacity to lend temporal assistance to those that are in danger of starvation for Christ's sake; but no missionary effort can be in a healthy condition where all, or the greater portion, of the converts are so dependent upon the funds of the mission that if the funds were withdrawn the apparent results would vanish into thin air. Such missions are utterly unlike the missions of the apostolic Church; for the converts of the apostolic age were made by men who went forth without purse or scrip, who could not give temporal assistance even had they desired to do so, and whose great object ever was to develop in their followers a healthy spirit of Christian manliness and honest independence.

III. Then, again, this passage teaches a much-needed lesson to the Church at home about the methods of poor relief and almsgiving. "Blessed," says the Psalmist, "is he that considereth the poor." He does not say, "Blessed is he that giveth money to the poor," but, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." Well-directed, wise, prudent almsgiving is a good and beneficial thing, but indiscriminate almsgiving, almsgiving bestowed without care, thought, and considera-

[1] An interesting illustration of ancient missionary work and its likeness to modern efforts turned up a few years ago among the Fayûm papyri. It was a document containing the curse pronounced by a pagan mother upon her son who had turned Christian, solemnly cutting him off from his kith and kin. It will be found in a translated shape in the *Transactions* of the Society of Biblical Archæology for 1884, Part I. Modern converts, too, just like the ancient, have often to suffer the loss of all things for Christ's sake.

tion such as the Psalmist suggests, brings with it far more evil than it prevents. The Church of Jerusalem very soon had experience of these evils. Jealousies and quarrels soon sprang up even where Apostles were ministering and the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were present,—"There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations;" and it has been ever since the experience of those called to deal with questions of temporal relief and the distribution of alms, that no classes are more suspicious and more quarrelsome than those who are in receipt of such assistance. The chaplains and managers of almshouses, asylums, charitable funds, and workhouses know this to their cost, and ofttimes make a bitter acquaintance with that evil spirit which burst forth even in the mother Church of Jerusalem. Time necessarily hangs heavy upon the recipients' hands, forethought and care are removed and cease to engage the mind, and people having nothing else to do begin to quarrel. But this was not the only evil which arose: hypocrisy and ostentation, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, deceit, thriftlessness, and idleness showed themselves at Jerusalem, Thessalonica, and other places, as the Epistles of St. Paul amply testify. And so it has been in the experience of the modern Church. I know myself of whole districts where almsgiving has quite demoralised the poor and eaten the heart out of their religion, so that they value religious ministrations, not for the sake of the religion that is taught, but solely for the sake of the temporal relief that accompanies it. I know of a district where, owing to the want of organization in religious effort and the shattered and broken character of Protestant Christianity, the poor

people are visited and relieved by six or seven competing religious communities, so that a clever person can make a very fair income by a judicious manipulation of the different visitors. It is evident that such visitations are doing evil instead of good, and the labour and money expended are worse than useless. The proper organization of charitable relief is one of the desirable objects the Church should set before it. The great point to be aimed at should be not so much the ministration of direct assistance to the people as the development of the spirit of self-help. And here comes in the action of the Christian State. The institution of the Post Office Savings Bank, where the State guarantees the safety of the depositor's money, seems a direct exposition and embodiment of the principle which underlay the community of goods in the apostolic Church. That principle was a generous, unselfish, Christlike principle. The principle was right, though the particular shape which the principle took was a mistaken one. Experience has taught the Church of Christ a wiser course, and now the system of State-guaranteed Savings Banks enables the Church to lead the poor committed to her care into wiser courses. Parochial and congregational Savings Banks ought to be attached to all Christian organizations, so as to teach the poor the industrial lessons which they need. We have known a district in a most thriftless neighbourhood, where immense sums used to be wasted in indiscriminate almsgiving, and yet where the people, like the woman in the Gospels, were never one whit the better, but rather grew worse. We have seen such a district, in the course of a few years, quite regenerated in temporal matters, simply by the action of what is called a parochial Penny

Savings Bank. Previously to its institution the slightest fall of snow brought heart-rending appeals for coal funds, blankets, and food; while a few years of its operation banished coal funds and pauperism in every shape, simply by teaching the people the magic law of thrift, and by developing within them the love and the power of self-respecting and industrious independence. And yet efforts in this direction will not be destructive of Christian charity. They tend not to dry up the springs of Christian love. Charity is indeed a blessing to the giver, and we should never desire to see the opportunity wanting for its display. Ill indeed would be the world's state if we had no longer the poor, the sick, the needy with us. Our sinful human nature requires its unselfish powers to be kept in action, or else it quickly subsides into a state of unwholesome stagnation. Poor people need to be taught habits of saving, and this teaching will require time, and trouble, and expense. The clergy and their congregations may teach the poor thrift by offering a much higher interest than the Post Office supplies, while, at the same time, the funds are all deposited in the State Savings Bank. That higher interest will often demand as much money as the doles previously bestowed in the shape of mere gifts of coal and food. But then what a difference in the result! The mere dole has, for the most part, a demoralising tendency, while the money spent in the other direction permanently elevates and blesses.[1]

[1] It is not generally known that the Post Office offers special facilities for the establishment of such Penny Savings Banks as I advocate. The Post Office will supply books for depositors and permit a deposit account to be opened without any limit. I have seen in my own parish the beneficial working of such an institution, increasing annually in its results for the last twenty years.

IV. But there is a more important lesson still to be derived from this incident in the apostolic Church. The community of goods failed in that Church when tried under the most favourable circumstances, terminating in the permanent degradation of the Christian community at Jerusalem; just as similar efforts must ever fail, no matter how broad the field on which they may be tried or how powerful the forces which may be arrayed on their behalf. Christian legislatures of our own age may learn a lesson of warning against perilous experiments in a communistic direction from the disastrous failure in Jerusalem; and there is a real danger in this respect from the tendency of human nature to rush to extremes. Protestantism and the Reformation accentuated the individual and individual independence. The feeling thus taught in religion reacted on the world of life and action, developing an intensity of individualism in the political world which paralysed the efforts which the State alone could make in the various matters of sanitary education and social reform. In the last generation Maurice and Kingsley and men of their school raised in opposition the banner of Christian socialism, because they saw clearly that men had run too far in the direction of individualism,—so far, indeed, that they were inclined to forget the great lesson taught by Christianity that under the new law we are members one of another, and that all members belong to one body, and that body is Christ. Men are so narrow that they can for the most part take only one view at a time, and so now they are inclined to push Christian socialism to the same extreme as at Jerusalem, and to forget that there is a great truth in individualism as there is another great truth in Christian socialism. Dr. Newman in his valuable but almost

forgotten work on the Prophetical Office of the Church defined the position of the English Church as being a *Media Via*, a mean between two extremes. Whatever may be said upon other topics, the office of the Christian Church is most certainly a *Via Media*, a mean between the two opposite extremes of socialism and individualism. Much good has been effected of late years by legislation based upon essentially socialistic ideas. Reformatory and industrial schools, to take but one instance, are socialistic in their foundations and in their tendencies. The whole body of the State undertakes in them responsibilities and duties which God intended individuals to discharge, but which individuals persistently neglect, to the injury of their innocent offspring, and of society at large. Yet even in this simple experiment we can see the germs of the same evils which sprang up at Jerusalem. We have seen this tendency appearing in connection with the Industrial School system, and have known parents who could educate and train their children in family life encouraged by this well-intentioned legislation to fling their responsibilities over upon the State, and neglecting their offspring because they were convinced that in doing so they were not only saving their own pockets but also doing better for their children than they themselves could. It is just the same, and has ever been the same, with all similar legislation. It requires to be most narrowly watched. Human nature is intensely lazy and intensely selfish. God has laid down the law of individual effort and individual responsibility, and while we should strive against the abuses of that law, we should watch with equal care against the opposite abuses. Foundling hospitals as they were worked in the last century, for instance, form an object-lesson of the

dangers inherent in such methods of action. Benevolent persons in the last century pitied the condition of poor children left as foundlings. There was, some sixty years ago, an institution in Dublin of this kind, which was supported by the State. There was a box into which an infant could be placed at any hour of the day or night; a bell was rung, and by the action of a turn-stile the infant was received into the institution. But experience soon taught the same lesson as at Jerusalem. The Foundling Hospital may have temporarily relieved some deserving cases and occasionally prevented some very painful scenes, but the broad results upon society at large were so bad, immorality was so increased, the sense of parental responsibility was so weakened, that the State was compelled to terminate its existence at a very large expense. Socialism when pushed to an extreme must necessarily work out in bad results, and that because there is one constant and fixed quantity which the socialist forgets. Human nature changes not; human nature is corrupt and must remain corrupt until the end, and so long as the corruption of human nature remains the best-conceived plans of socialism must necessarily fail.

Yet the Jerusalem idea of a voluntary community of goods was a noble one, and sprang from an unselfish root. It was purely voluntary indeed. There was no compulsion upon any to adopt it. "Not one of them said that aught that he possessed was his own," is St. Luke's testimony on the point. "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" are St. Peter's words, clearly testifying that this Christian communism was simply the result and outcome of loving hearts who, under the influence of an overmastering emotion, had

cast prudence to the winds. The communism of Jerusalem may have been unwise, but it was the proof of generous and devout spirits. It was an attempt, too, to realize the conditions of the new life in the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, while still the old heaven and the old earth remained. It was an enthusiasm, a high, a holy, and a noble enthusiam; and though it failed in some respects, still the enthusiasm begotten of fervent Christian love succeeded in another direction, for it enabled the Apostles "with great power to give witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The union of these two points in the sacred narrative has profound spiritual teaching for the Church of Christ. Unselfishness in worldly things, enthusiasm about the kingdom of Christ, fervent love to the brethren, are brought into nearest contact and united in closest bonds with the possession of special spiritual power over the hearts of the unbelievers. And then, again, the unselfishness existed amongst the body of the Church, the mass of the people at large. We are sure that the Apostles were leaders in the acts of self-denial. No great work is carried out where the natural and divinely-sent leaders hang back. But it is the love and enthusiasm of the mass of the people which excite St. Luke's notice, and which he illustrates by the contrasted cases of Barnabas and Ananias; and he connects this unselfish enthusiasm of the people with the possession of great power by the Apostles. Surely we can read a lesson suitable for the Church of all ages in this collocation. The law of interaction prevails between clergy and people still as it did between the Apostles and people of old. The true minister of Christ will frequently bear before the throne of God those souls

with whom the Holy Ghost has entrusted him, and without such personal intercession he cannot expect real success in his work. But then, on the other hand, this passage suggests to us that enthusiasm, fervent faith, unselfish love on the people's part are the conditions of ministerial power with human souls. A people filled with Christ's love, and abounding in enthusiasm, even by a mere natural process produce power in their leaders, for the hearts of the same leaders beat quicker and their tongues speak more forcibly because they feel behind them the immense motive power of hallowed faith and sacred zeal. But we believe in a still higher blessing. When people are unselfish, brimming over with generous Christian love, it calls down a supernatural, a Divine power. The Pentecostal Spirit of love again descends, and in roused hearts and converted souls and purified and consecrated intellects rewards with a blessing such as they desire the men and women who long for the salvation of their brethren, and are willing, like these apostolic Christians, to sacrifice their dearest and their best for it.

CHAPTER XI.

HONESTY AND PRETENCE IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

"And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."—ACTS iv. 36, 37.

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost; and great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him."—ACTS v. 1-6.

THE exact period in the history of the apostolic Church at which we have now arrived is a most interesting one. We stand at the very first origin of a new development in Christian life and thought. Let us observe it well, for the whole future of the Church is bound up with it. Christianity was at the beginning simply a sect of Judaism. It is plain that the Apostles at first thus regarded it. They observed Jewish rites, they joined in the temple and synagogue worship, they restricted salvation and God's favour to the children of Abraham, and merely added belief in Jesus of

Nazareth as the promised Messiah to the common Jewish faith. The Spirit of God was indeed speaking through the Apostles, leading them, as it led St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, to speak words with a meaning and scope far beyond their thoughts. They, like the prophets of old, knew not as yet what manner of things the Spirit which was in them did signify.

"As little children lisp, and tell of Heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thought to those high bards were given."

Their speech had a grander and wider application than they themselves dreamt of; but the power of prejudice and education was far too great even for the Apostles, and so, though the nobility and profuseness of God's mercy were revealed and the plenteousness of His grace was announced by St. Peter himself, yet the glory of the Divine gift was still unrecognised. Jerusalem, the Temple, the Old Covenant, Israel after the flesh,—these things as yet bounded and limited the horizon of Christ's Church. How were the new ideas to gain an entrance? How was the Church to rise to a sense of the magnificence and universality of its mission? Joseph, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, emerges upon the scene and supplies the answer, proving himself in very deed a son of consolation, because he became the occasion of consoling the masses of mankind with that truest comfort, the peace of God which passes all understanding. Let us see how this came about.

I. The Christian leaders belonged originally to the extreme party in Judaism. The Jews were at this time divided into two sections. There was the Hebrew party on the one hand; extreme Nationalists as we might call them. They hated everything foreign.

They clung to the soil of Palestine, to its language and to its customs. They trained up their children in an abhorrence of Greek civilisation, and could see nothing good in it. This party was very unprogressive, very narrow-minded, and, therefore, unfit to recognise the developments of God's purposes. The Galileans were very prominent among them. They lived in a provincial district, remote from the influences of the great centres of thought and life, and missed, therefore, the revelations of God's mind which He is evermore making through the course of His providential dealings with mankind. The Galileans furnished the majority of the earliest Christian leaders, and they were not fitted from their narrowness to grasp the Divine intentions with respect to Christianity and its mission. What a lesson for every age do we behold in this intellectual and spiritual defect of the Galileans. They were conscientious, earnest, devout, spiritually-minded men. Christ loved them as such, and devoted Himself to their instruction. But they were one-sided and illiberal. Their very provincialism, which had sheltered them from Sadduceism and unbelief, had filled them with blind prejudices, and as the result had rendered them unable to read aright the mind of God and the development of His purposes. Man, alas! is a very weak creature, and human nature is very narrow. Piety is no guarantee for wisdom and breadth, and strong faith in God's dealings in the past often hinders men from realizing and obeying the Divine guidance and the evolution of His purposes amid the changed circumstances of the present. The Galilean leaders were best fitted to testify with unfaltering zeal to the miracles and resurrection of Christ. They were not best fitted to lead the Church into the possession of the Gentiles.

There was another party among the Jews whom God had trained by the guidance of His Providence for this purpose. The Acts of the Apostles casts a strong and comforting light back upon the history of the Lord's dealings with the Jews ever since the days of the Babylonish Captivity. We can see in the story told in the Acts the reason why God permitted the overthrow of Jerusalem by the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, and the apparent defeat for the time of His own designs towards the chosen people. The story of the dispersion is a standing example how wonderfully God evolves good out of seeming ill, making all things work together for the good of His Church. The dispersion prepared a section of the Jews, by travel, by foreign civilization, by culture, and by that breadth of mind and sympathy which is thereby produced, to be mediators between the Hebrew party with all their narrowness, and the masses of the Gentile world whom the strict Jews would fain have shut out from the hope of God's mercy. This liberal and progressive party is called in the Acts of the Apostles the Hellenists. They were looked at askance by the more old-fashioned Hebrews. They were Jews, children of Abraham indeed, of the genuine stock of Israel. As such they had a true standing-ground within the Jewish fold, and as true Jews could exercise their influence from within much more effectually than if they stood without; for it has been well remarked by a shrewd observer, that every party, religious or political, is much more powerfully affected by movements springing from within than by attacks directed from without. An explosive operates with much more destructive force when acting from within or underneath a fortification than when brought into play from outside. Such was the Hellenistic

party. No one could deny their true Jewish character, but they had been liberalized by their heaven-sent contact with foreigners and foreign lands; and hence it is that we discern in the Hellenistic party, and specially in Joseph who by the Apostle was surnamed Barnabas, the beginnings of the glorious ingathering of the Gentiles, the very first rift in the thick dark cloud of prejudice which as yet kept back even the Apostles themselves from realizing the great object of the gospel dispensation. The Hellenists, with their wealth, their culture, their new ideas, their sense and value of Greek thought, were the bridge by which the spiritual life, hitherto wrapped in Jewish swaddling clothes, was to pass over to the masses of the Gentile world. The community of goods led Joseph Barnabas to dedicate his substance to the same noble cause of unselfishness. That dedication led to disputes between Hellenists and Hebrews, and these disputes occasioned the election of the seven deacons, who, in part, at least, belonged to the more liberal section. Among these deacons we find St. Stephen, whose teaching and martyrdom were directly followed by St. Paul and his conversion, and St. Paul was the Apostle of the Gentiles and the vindicator of Christian freedom and Christian liberty. St. Barnabas and his act of self-denial and self-sacrifice in surrendering his landed estate are thus immediately connected with St. Paul by direct historic contact, even if they had not been subsequently associated as joint Apostles and messengers of the Churches in their first missionary journeys; while again the mistaken policy of communism is overruled to the world's abiding benefit and blessing. How wonderful, indeed, are the Lord's doings towards the children of men!

II. We have thus suggested one of the main lines

of thought which run through the first half of this book of the Acts. Let us now look a little more particularly at this Joseph Barnabas who was the occasion of this great, this new departure. We learn then, upon consulting the sacred text, that Joseph was a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race; he belonged, that is, to the class among the Jews whose interests were bound up with the maintenance of the existing order of things; and yet he had become a convert to the belief proclaimed by the Apostles. At the same time, while we give full credit to this Levite for his action, we must not imagine that either priests or Levites or Jews at that period fully realized all the consequences of their decisions. We find that men at every age take steps blindly, without thoroughly realizing all the results which logically and necessarily flow forth from them. Men in religious, political, social matters are blind and cannot see afar off. It is only step by step that the purposes of God dawn upon them, and Joseph Barnabas, the Levite of Cyprus, was no exception to this universal rule. He was not only a Levite, but a native of Cyprus, for Cyprus was then a great stronghold and resort of the Jewish race. It continued to be a great centre of Jewish influence for long afterwards. In the next century, for instance, a great Jewish rebellion burst forth wherever the Jews were strong enough. They rose in Palestine against the power of the Emperor Hadrian, and under their leader Barcochba vindicated the ancient reputation of the nation for desperate and daring courage; while, in sympathy with their brethren on the mainland, the Jews in Cyprus seized their arms and massacred a vast multitude of the Greek and Roman settlers, numbering, it is said, two hundred and forty thousand persons. The concourse of Jews to

Cyprus in the time of the Apostles is easily explained. Augustus Cæsar was a great friend and patron of Herod the Great, and he leased the celebrated copper mines of the island to that Herod, exacting a royalty upon their produce, as we learn from Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian (*Antiqq.*, xvi. iv. 5). It was only to be expected, then, that when a Jewish monarch was leaseholder and manager of the great mining industry of the island, his Jewish subjects should flock thither, and it was very natural that amongst the crowds who sought Cyprus there should be found a minister of the Jewish faith whose tribal descent as a Levite reminded them of Palestine, and of the City of God, and of the Temple of Jehovah and of its solemn, stately worship.[1] This residence of Barnabas in Cyprus accounts for his landed property which he had the right to sell just as he liked. A Levite in Palestine could not, according to the law of Moses when strictly construed, possess any private landed estate save in a Levitical city. Meyer, a German commentator of great reputation, has indeed suggested that Jer. xxxii. 7, where Jeremiah is asked to redeem his cousin's field in the suburbs of Anathoth, proves that a member of the tribe of Levi could possess landed estate in Palestine. He therefore concludes that the old explanation that the landed property of Barnabas was in Cyprus, not in Palestine, could not stand. But the simple fact is that even the cleverest German expositors are not familiar with the text of their Bibles, for had

[1] Philo was a contemporary of the Apostles. He has left us many works dealing with this period. He speaks of the Jews of Cyprus in the account of his embassy to the Emperor Caius Caligula. See Milman's *History of Jews*, iii., 111, 112, and Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*, chap. v.

Meyer been thus familiar he would have remembered that Anathoth was a city belonging to the priests and the tribe of Levi, and that the circumstance of Jeremiah the priest possessing a right to landed property in Anathoth was no proof whatsoever that he could hold landed property anywhere else, and, above all, affords no ground for the conclusion that he could dispose of it in the absolute style which Barnabas here displayed.[1] We conclude then that the action of Barnabas on this occasion dealt with his landed estate in Cyprus, the country where he was born, where he was well known, and where his memory is even still cherished on account of the work he there performed in conjunction with St. Paul.

III. Let us see what else we can glean concerning this personage thus prominent in the early Church, first for his generosity, and then for his missionary character and success. It is indeed one of the most fruitful and interesting lines upon which Bible study can be pursued, thus to trace the scattered features of the less known and less prominent characters of Scripture, and see wherein God's grace specially abounded in them.

The very personal appearance of Barnabas can be recalled by the careful student of this book.[2] Though it lies a little out of our way, we shall note the circum-

[1] See Lightfoot's *Horæ Heb.*, Acts iv. 36; *cf.* Josh. xxi. 18.

[2] The early history of Barnabas is thus described by Metaphrastes, an ancient Greek writer. Barnabas was born in Cyprus, of rich parents, who sent him to be trained at Jerusalem under Gamaliel. There he formed an early friendship with St. Paul. He was a witness of our Lord's miracles, and was converted by the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda. He then was the means of converting his sister Mary and her son Mark, who was the young man with the pitcher of water whom our Lord commanded His disciples to follow when He was sending them to prepare the Passover. Mary's house was the place where the upper room was situated, and continued to be the meeting-place of the Christians, as we find from Acts xii. Metaphrastes had formerly a

stance, as it will help us to form a more lively image of Barnabas, the Son of Consolation. The two Apostles, Paul and Barnabas, were on their first missionary tour when they came to the city of Lystra in Lycaonia. There the multitude, astonished at the miracle wrought upon the cripple by St. Paul, attempted to pay divine honours to the two Christian missionaries. "They called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker." It must have been their physical characteristics as well as the mode of address used by the Apostles which led to these names; and from the extant records of antiquity we know that Jupiter was always depicted as a man with a fine commanding presence, while Mercury, the god of eloquent speech, was a more insignificant figure. Jupiter, therefore, struck the Lycaonian people as the fittest name for the taller and more imposing-looking Apostle, while St. Paul, who was in bodily presence contemptible, was designated by the name of the active and restless Mercury. His character again shines through every recorded action of St. Barnabas. He was a thoroughly sympathetic man, and, like all such characters, he was ever swept along by the prevailing wave of thought or action, without allowing that supreme place to the judgment and the natural powers which they should always hold if the feelings and sympathies are not to land us in positions involving dire ruin and loss. He was carried away by the enthusiasm for Christian communism

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very bad reputation as regards truthfulness, but modern investigation has shown that his *Lives* contain some very ancient documents, going back to the second century at least. See Bishop Lightfoot's address to the Carlisle Church Congress in *Expositor* 1885, vol. i., p. 3; Prof. Ramsay in *Expositor* 1889, vol. ix., p. 265 and refs., and Cave's *Lives of the Primitive Fathers*, p. 35.

which now seized upon the Jerusalem Church. He was influenced by the Judaizing movement at Antioch, so that "even Barnabas was carried away with the Petrine dissimulation." His sympathies got the better of his judgment in the matter of St. Mark's conduct in abandoning the ministry to which St. Paul had called him. His heart was stronger, in fact, than his head. And yet this very weakness qualified him to be the Son of Consolation. A question has, indeed, been raised whether he should be called the Son of Consolation or the Son of Exhortation, but, practically, there is no difference. His consolations were administered through his exhortations. His speech and his advice were of a consoling, healing, comforting kind. There are still such men to be found in the Church. Just as all other apostolic graces and characteristics are still manifested, —the eloquence of a Paul, the courage of a Peter, the speculative flights of a John,—so the sympathetic power of a Barnabas is granted to some. And a very precious gift it is. There are some good men whose very tone of voice and bodily attitudes—their heads thrown back and their arms akimbo, and their aggressive walk—at once provoke opposition. They are pugnacious Christians, ever on the look out for some topic of blame and controversy. There are others, like this Barnabas, whose voices bring consolation, and whose words, even when not the clearest or the most practical, speak counsels of peace, and come to us thick-laden with the blessed dews of charity. Their advice is not, indeed, always the wisest. Their ardent cry is always, Peace, peace. Such a man on the political stage was the celebrated Lucius Carey, Lord Falkland, in the days of the great civil war, who, though he adhered to the Royalist cause, seemed, as the historian tells us, to have utterly lost all heart once

that active hostilities commenced. Men of this type appear in times of great religious strife. Erasmus, for instance, at the time of the Reformation, possessed a good deal of this spirit which is devoted to compromise, and ever inclined to place the interests of peace and charity above those of truth and principle, just as Barnabas would have done at Antioch were it not for the protest of his stronger and sterner friend St. Paul. And yet such men, with their sympathetic hearts and speech, have their own great use, infusing a healing, consoling tone into seasons of strife, when others are only too apt to lose sight of the sweet image of Christian love in pursuit of what they consider the supreme interests of religious or political truth. Such a man was Barnabas all his life, and such we behold him on his first visible entrance upon the stage of Church history, when his sympathies and his generosity led him to consecrate his independent property in Cyprus to his brethren's support, and to bring the money and lay down at the Apostles' feet.

IV. Now for the contrast drawn for us by the inspired pen of St. Luke, a contrast we find oft repeating itself in Church history. Here we have the generous sympathetic Son of Consolation on the one side, and here, too, we have a warning and a type for all time that the tares must evermore be mingled with the wheat, the false with the true, the hypocrites with real servants of God, even until the final separation. The accidental division of the book into chapters hinders casual readers from noticing that the action of Ananias and his wife is set by the writer over against that of Barnabas. Barnabas sold his estate and brought the price, the whole price, and surrendered it as an offering to the Church. The spirit of enthusiastic giving was abroad,

and had seized upon the community; and Barnabas sympathized with it. Ananias and Sapphira were carried away too, but their spirits were meaner. They desired to have all the credit the Church would give them for acting as generously as Barnabas did, and yet, while getting credit for unselfish and unstinting liberality, to be able to enjoy in private somewhat of that which they were believed to have surrendered. And their calculations were terribly disappointed. They tried to play the hypocrite's part on most dangerous ground just when the Divine Spirit of purity, sincerity, and truth had been abundantly poured out, and when the spirit of deceit and hypocrisy was therefore at once recognised. It was with the Apostles and their spiritual natures then as it is with ourselves and our physical natures still. When we are living in a crowded city we notice not strange scents and ill-odours and foul gases: our senses are dulled, and our perceptive powers are rendered obtuse because the whole atmosphere is a tainted one. But when we dwell in the pure air of the country, and the glorious breezes from mountain and moor blow round us fresh and free, then we detect at once, and at a long distance, the slightest ill-odour or the least trace of offensive gas. The outpoured presence of the Spirit, and the abounding love which was produced thereby, quickened the perception of St. Peter. He recognised the hypocrisy, characterized the sin of Ananias as a lie against the Holy Ghost; and then the Spirit and Giver of life, seconding and supporting the words of St. Peter, withdrew His support from the human frame of the sinner, and Ananias ceased to live, just as Sapphira, his partner in deceit, ceased to live a few hours later. The death of Ananias and Sapphira have been ofttimes the subject of much

criticism and objection, on the part of persons who do not realize the awfulness of their position, the full depths of their hypocrisy, and the importance of the lesson taught by their punishment to the Church of every age. Their position was a specially awful one, for they were brought into closest contact, as no Christian can now be brought, with the powers of the world to come. The Spirit was vouchsafed during those earliest days of the Church in a manner and style which we hear nothing of during the later years of the Apostles. He proved His presence by physical manifestations, as when the whole house was shaken where the Apostles were assembled; a phenomenon of which we read nothing in the latter portion of the Acts. By the gift of tongues, by miracles of healing, by abounding spiritual life and discernment, by physical manifestations, the most careless and thoughtless in the Christian community were compelled to feel that a supernatural power was present in their midst and specially resting upon the Apostles. Yet it was into such an atmosphere that the spirit of hypocrisy and of covetousness, the two vices to which Christianity was specially opposed, and which the great Master had specially denounced, obtruded itself as Satan gained entrance into Eden, to defile with their foul presence the chosen dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost vindicated His authority therefore, because, as it must be observed, it was not St. Peter sentenced Ananias to death. No one may have been more surprised than St. Peter himself at the consequences which followed his stern rebuke. St. Peter merely declared his sin, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God;" and then it is expressly said, "Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost." It was a stern action indeed;

but then all God's judgments have a stern side. Ananias and Sapphira were cut off in their sins, but men are every day summoned into eternity in precisely the same state and the same way, and the only difference is that in the case of Ananias we see the sin which provoked the punishment and then we see the punishment immediately following. Men object to this narrative simply because they have a one-sided conception of Christianity such as this period of the world's history delights in. They would make it a religion of pure unmitigated love; they would eliminate from it every trace of sternness, and would thus leave it a poor weak flabby thing, without backbone or earnestness, and utterly unlike all other dispensations of the Lord, which have their stern sides and aspects as well as their loving.

It may well have been that this incident was inserted in this typical Church history to correct a false idea which would otherwise have grown up. The Jews were quite well accustomed to regard the Almighty as a God of judgment as well as a God of love. Perhaps we might even say that they viewed Him more in the former light than in the latter. Our Lord was obliged, in fact, to direct some of His most searching discourses to rebuke this very tendency. The Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, the men upon whom the tower of Siloam fell,—neither party were sinners above all that were at Jerusalem, or were punished as such. Such was his teaching in opposition to the popular idea. The Apostles were once quite ready to ascribe the infirmity of the man born blind to the direct judgment of the Almighty upon himself or upon his parents. But men are apt to rush from one extreme to another. The Apostles and their followers

were now realizing their freedom in the Spirit; and some were inclined to run into licentiousness as the result of that same freedom. They were realizing, too, their relationship to God as one of pure filial love, and they were in great danger of forgetting that God was a God of justice and judgment as well, till this stern dispensation recalled them to a sense of the fact that eternal love is also eternal purity and eternal truth, and will by no means clear the guilty. This is a lesson very necessary for every age of the Church. Men are always inclined, and never, perhaps, so much as at the present time, to look away from the severe side of religion, or even to deny that religion can have a severe side at all. This tendency in religious matters is indeed simply an exhibition of the spirit of the age. It is a time of great material prosperity and comfort, when pain is regarded as the greatest possible evil, softness, ease, and enjoyment the greatest possible good. Men shrink from the infliction of pain even upon the greatest criminals; and this spirit infects their religion, which they would fain turn into a mere matter of weakly sentiment. Against such a notion the judicial action of the Holy Ghost in this case raises an eternal protest, warning the Church against one-sided and partial views of truth, and bidding her never to lower her standard at the world's call. Men may ignore the fact that God has His severe aspect and His stern dispensations in nature, but yet the fact remains. And as it is in nature so is it in grace: God is merciful and loving to the penitent, but towards the hypocritical and covetous He is a stern judge, as the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira proved.

V. This seems one of the great permanent lessons for the Church of every age which this passage embodies,

but it is not the only one. There are many others, and they most important. An eminent modern commentator and expositor[1] has drawn out at great length, and with many modern applications and illustrations, four great lessons which may be derived from this transaction. We shall just note them, giving a brief analysis of each. (1) There is such a thing as acting as well as telling a falsehood. Ananias did not say that the money he brought was the whole price of his land; he simply allowed men to draw this conclusion for themselves, suggesting merely by his conduct that he was doing exactly the same as Barnabas. There was no science of casuistry in the apostolic Church, teaching how near to the borders of a lie a man may go without actually being guilty of lying. The lie of Ananias was a spiritual act, a piece of deception attempted in the abyss of the human soul, and perpetrated, or attempted rather, upon the Holy Spirit. How often men lie after the same example. They do not speak a lie, but they act a lie, throwing dust into the eyes of others as to their real motives and objects, as Ananias did here. He sold his estate, brought the money to the Apostles, and would fain have got the character of a man of extraordinary liberality and unselfishness, just like others who truly sacrificed their all, while he enjoyed in private the portion which he had kept back. Ananias wished to make the best of both worlds, and failed in his object. He sought to obtain a great reputation among men, but had no regard to the secret eye and judgment of the Almighty. Alas! how many of our actions, how much of our piety and of our almsgiving, is tainted by precisely the same vice.

[1] C. J. Vaughan, D.D., *The Church of the First Days*, pp. 105-1

Our good works are done with a view to man's approbation, and not as in the sight of the Eternal God.

(2) What an illustration we find in this passage of the saying of the Apostle, "The love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves with many sorrows!" The other scriptures are full of warnings against this vice of covetousness; and so this typical history does not leave the Church without an illustration of its power and danger. Surely if at a time when the supernatural forces of the unseen life were specially manifested, this vice intruded into the special sphere of their influence, the Church of every age should be on its perpetual guard against this spirit of covetousness which the Bible characterises as idolatry.

(3) What a responsibility is involved in being brought near to God as members of His Son's Church below! There were hypocrites in abundance at Jerusalem at that time, but they had not been blessed as Ananias had been, and therefore were not punished as he. There is a reality in our connection with Christ which must tell upon us, if not for good, then inevitably for evil. Christ is either the savour of life unto life or else the savour of death unto death unto all brought into contact with Him. In a far more awful sense than for the Jews the words of the prophet Ezekiel are true, "That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone;"[1] or as the poet of the *Christian Year* has well put it in his hymn for the eighteenth Sunday after Trinity:—

> "Fain would our lawless hearts escape,
> And with the heathen be,

[1] Ezek. xx. 32.

To worship every monstrous shape
In fancied darkness free.

Vain thought, that shall not be at all,
Refuse we or obey;
Our ears have heard th' Almighty's call,
We cannot be as they.

We cannot hope the heathen's doom
To whom God's Son is given,
Whose eyes have seen beyond the tomb,
Who have the key of Heaven."

(4) Lastly, let us learn from this history how to cast out the fear of one another by the greater and more awful fear of God. The fear of man is a good thing in a degree. We should have respect to the opinion of our fellows, and strive to win it in a legitimate way. But Ananias and his consort desired the good opinion of the Christian community regardless of the approval or the watchful eye of the Supreme Judge, who interposed to teach His people by an awful example that in the new dispensation of Love, as well as in the old dispensation of Law, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that they and they alone have a good understanding who order their lives according to that fear, whether in their secret thoughts or in their public actions.

CHAPTER XII.

GAMALIEL AND HIS PRUDENT ADVICE.

"And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the Apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."—ACTS v. 38-40.

WE have set forth in these verses an incident in the second appearance before the council of the Apostle Peter and the other Apostles, conspicuous among whom must have been James the brother of John. It is almost certain that James the son of Zebedee was at this time very prominent in the public work of the Church, for we are told in the opening of the twelfth chapter that when Herod would vex and harass and specially weaken the Church, it was neither Peter nor John he first arrested, but he laid hands on James, and placed on him the honour of being the earliest martyr from amongst the sacred band of the Apostles. Peter we may, however, be sure was the centre of Sadducean hate at this period, and one of the most conspicuous members of the Church. We should at the same time beware of exaggeration, and strive to estimate the events of these earliest days of the Church, not as we behold them now, but as they must have then

appeared unto the members of the Sanhedrin. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira seem now to us extraordinary and awe-inspiring, and sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of all unbelievers; but probably the story of them had never reached the ears of the authorities. Human life was but little accounted of among the Romans who ruled Palestine. A Roman master might slay or torture his slaves just as he pleased; and the Romans, scorning the Jews as a conquered race, would trouble themselves but little concerning quarrels or deaths among them, so long as public order and the stated business of society were not interfered with. The public miracles which St. Peter wrought, these were the things which brought matters to a crisis, and called afresh the attention of the Sanhedrin, charged as they were with all religious authority, as the miracle of healing wrought upon the impotent man had led to the arrest of the Apostles on a previous occasion.[1] It is a mistake often made, in studying the history of the past, to imagine that events which we now see to have been important and

[1] Acts v. 12-16 states that St. Peter wrought many miracles, and further that men sought to place their sick in such a position that even his shadow might fall upon them, thinking that it brought healing with it. This statement has been spoken of as a demonstrative proof of legendary growth by Zeller in his work on the Acts, and is weakly apologised for by Meyer. But the analogy of hypnotism at the present time, when cures are wrought and extraordinary influence exercised without corporeal contact, is quite sufficient to vindicate St. Luke's account from the charge of legend. If moderns can produce marvellous results without immediate touch; if, for instance, hypnotised patients when blindfolded can read a book by means of their stomachs or their noses (Moll, p. 366, already quoted), or blisters can be raised by a piece of white paper merely by suggestion, as stated by Moll, pp. 114-22, surely the statement of St. Luke is no necessary proof of legend and old wives' fables. See my remarks on p. 100 above.

epoch-making must have been so regarded by persons living at the time when they happened. Men are never worse judges of the true value of current history than when they are placed in the midst of it. It is always the on-lookers who see most of the play. Our minds are so limited, our thoughts are so completely filled up with the present, that it is not till we have got away from the events, and can view them in their due proportion and symmetry, surrounded with all their circumstances, that we can hope to form a just appreciation of their relative importance. I have often seen a hill of a few hundred feet in height occupying a far more commanding position in men's eyes than a really lofty mountain, simply because the one was near, the other far off. The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira are recorded therefore at full length, because they bring eternal lessons of justice, judgment, and truth along with them. The numerous public miracles wrought by Peter when "multitudes came together from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk and them that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one," seemed to the Sanhedrin and the religious public of Jerusalem the all-important topics, though they are passed wholly over in the Scriptures as matters of no spiritual interest. If it requires a vast exercise of patience and wisdom to estimate events aright in their mere worldly aspect, it requires the operation and guidance of the Holy Ghost to form a sound judgment upon the relative spiritual value of events falling within the sphere of Church history; and there indeed it is most true that matters which seem all-important and striking to man are judged by God as insignificant and unworthy of notice. So contradictory are ofttimes the ways of God and the opinions of man.

The public miracles wrought by St. Peter had this effect,—the only one noted at length by the sacred writer: they led to the fresh arrest of Peter and the other Apostles by the High Priest and the sect of the Sadducees, and to their incarceration in the public prison attached to the temple. Thence they were delivered by an angel and sent to speak publicly in the temple, where their adversaries officially assembled; just as on a later occasion Peter, when imprisoned by himself, was released by angelic interference. Men looking back upon the history of the primitive Church, and judging of it as if it were the history of an ordinary time and age, have objected to the angelic interventions narrated here and in a few other places in the New Testament. They object because they do not realize the circumstances of the time. Dr. Jortin was a shrewd writer of the last century, now too much neglected. He remarked in one place that, suppose we admit that a special revelation of the good powers of the heavenly world was made in Christ, it was natural and fair that a special manifestation of the powers of evil should have been permitted at the time of Christ's Incarnation, in order that the triumph of good might be the greater; and thus he would account for the diabolical possessions which play such an important part in the New Testament. The principle thus laid down extends much farther indeed. The great miracle of the Incarnation, the great manifestation of God in Christ, naturally brought with it lesser heavenly manifestations in its train. The Incarnation raises for a believer the whole level of the age when it occurred, and makes it an exceptional time. The eternal gates were for a moment lifted up, and angels went in and out for a little; and therefore we accept without endeavouring to explain

the words of the narrative which tells us that an angel opened the prison doors for the Apostles, bidding them go and speak in the temple all the words of this life. And then from the temple, where they were teaching early in the morning, about daybreak of the day following their arrest, they are led by the officers before the Sanhedrin which was sitting in the city. Here let us pause to note the marvellous accuracy of detail in St. Luke's narrative. The Sanhedrin used to sit in the temple, but a few years before the period at which we have arrived, four or five at most, they removed from the temple into the city, a fact which is just hinted at in the fifth verse of the fourth chapter, where we are told that the rulers, and elders, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem, that is, in the city, not in the temple; while again in this passage we read that when the High Priest came and convened the council and all the senate of the children of Israel, they sent their officers to bring the prisoners before them. These officers after a while returned with the information that the Apostles were preaching in the temple. If the Sanhedrin were meeting in the temple, they would doubtless have learned this fact as soon as they assembled, especially as they did not sit till after the morning sacrifice, several hours after the Apostles appeared in the temple.[1] When brought before the council the Apostles boldly proclaimed their intention to disregard all human threats, and persevere in preaching the death and resurrection of Christ. The majority would then have proceeded to extreme

[1] See Dr. John Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ*, on the Acts, iv. 5. *Cf.* his remarks on St. Mark xv. 1, where that learned Hebraist seems to support this view, though admitting that there is something to be said on the other side, viz., that the council met in the temple as of old.

measures against the Apostles, and in doing so would only have acted after their usual manner.

The greater part of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees and they, as Josephus tells us, were men of a bloodthirsty character, ever ready to proceed to punish in the most cruel manner. The simple fact is this, the Sadducees were materialists. They looked upon man as a mere animated machine, and therefore, like the pagans of the same period, they were utterly regardless of human sufferings or of the value of human life. We little recognise, reared up as we have been in an atmosphere saturated with Christian principles, how much of our merciful spirit, of our tender care for human suffering, of our reverent respect for human life, is owing to the spiritual ideas of the New Testament, teaching as it does the awful importance of time, the sanctity of the body, and the tremendous issues which depend upon life. Sadducees and pagans knew nothing of these things, because they knew nothing of the inestimable treasure lodged in every human form. Life and time would have been very different for mankind had not the spiritual principles inculcated by Pharisee and by Christian alike triumphed over the cold stern creed which strove on this occasion to stifle the religion of the Cross in its very infancy. When the Sadducees would have adopted extreme measures, the words of one man restrained them and saved the Apostles, and that one man was Gamaliel, whose name and career will again come before us. Now let us apply ourselves to the consideration of his address to the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel saw that the large public gathering to whom he was speaking were thoroughly excited and full of cruel purposes. He therefore, like a true orator, adopts the historical method as the fittest one for dealing with them.

He points out how other pretenders had arisen, trading on the Messianic expectations which then existed all over Palestine, and specially in Galilee, and how they had been all destroyed without any action on the part of the Sanhedrin. He instances two cases: Judas, who lived in the days of Cyrenius and the taxing under Augustus Cæsar; and Theudas, who some time previous to that event had arisen, working upon the religious and national hopes of the Jews, as the persons now accused before them seemed also to be doing. He points to the fate of the pretenders he had mentioned, and advises the Sanhedrin to leave the Apostles to the same test of Divine Providence, confident that if mere impostors, like the others, they will meet with the same death at the hands of the Romans, without any interference on their part.

It is evident that Gamaliel must have had some special reason for selecting the risings of Theudas and Judas, beyond the fact that they were rebels against established authority. The closing years of the kingdom of Herod the Great were times when numberless rebellions took place. Josephus gives us the names of several leaders who took part in them, but, as he tells us (*Antiqq.*, XVII. x. 4), there were then "ten thousand other disorders," into the details of which he did not enter. All these risings had, however, these distinguishing features, they were all unsuccessful, and they were all quenched in blood. Gamaliel must have seen some feature common to the Christian movement and to those headed by Theudas and Judas some thirty years earlier, leading him to adduce these examples. That common feature was their Messianic character. They all alike proclaimed new hopes for Israel, and appealed to the religious expectations which then ex-

cited the people, and still are embodied in works like the book of Enoch, produced about that period; while all the other attempts were animated by a mere spirit of plunder or of personal ambition. But here we are met with a difficulty. The rationalistic commentators of Germany have urged that St. Luke composed a fancy speech and put it into the mouth of Gamaliel, and in doing so made a great historic mistake. They appeal to Josephus as their authority. He states that a Theudas arose about A.D. 44, some ten years later than this meeting of the Sanhedrin, and drew a large number of adherents after him, but was defeated by the Roman governor. On the other hand, the words of Gamaliel refer to the case of a Theudas who lived half a century earlier, and preceded Judas the Galilean. To put the matter plainly, St. Luke is accused of having composed a speech for Gamaliel, and, when doing so, of having committed a great blunder, representing Gamaliel as appealing to an incident which did not happen till ten years later.[1]

This circumstance has long attracted the notice of commentators, and has been explained in different ways. Some maintain that there was an older Theudas, who headed an abortive Messianic rebellion previous to the time of Cyrenius and the days of the taxing. This is a very possible explanation, and the identity

[1] See, for instance, Zeller on the Acts of the Apostles, vol. i., p. 228 (Norgate and Williams: London, 1875), where he says: "We must therefore maintain the possibility that our author, after the fashion of ancient historians, freely invented Gamaliel's speech; and it is a question how much of it belongs to history at all, and especially whether Gamaliel delivered the discourse in favour of the Christian cause;" with which statement the whole context, pp. 223-32, should be compared. The report of Gamaliel's speech is due of course to St. Paul, who was doubtless present during its delivery.

of names constitutes no valid objection. The same names often occur in connection with the same movements, political or religious. In the third century, for instance, the Novatian heresy arose at Carthage, and thence was transferred to Rome. It was headed by two men, Novatus and Novatian, the former a Carthaginian, the latter a Roman presbyter. What a fine subject for a mythical theory, were not the facts too indisputably historical! How a German critic would revel in depicting the impossibility of two men with names so like holding precisely the same office and supporting exactly the same views in two cities so widely separated as Rome and Carthage! Or let us take two modern instances. The Tractarian movement is not yet quite sixty years old. It has not therefore yet passed out of the sphere of personal experience. It started in Oxford during the thirties, and there in Oxford we find at that very period two divines named William Palmer, both favouring the Tractarian views, both eminent writers and scholars, but yet tending finally in different directions, for one William Palmer became a Roman Catholic, while the other remained a devoted son of the Reformation. Or to come to still more modern times. There was an Irish movement in 1848 which numbered amongst its most prominent leaders a William Smith O'Brien, and there is now an Irish movement of the same character, and it also numbers a William O'Brien amongst its most prominent leaders. A Parnell leads the movement for repeal of the Union in 1890. Ninety years earlier, a Parnell resigned high office sooner than consent to the consummation of the same legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland. We might indeed produce parallel cases without number from the range of history, spe-

cially of English history, showing how political and religious tendencies run in families, and reproduce exactly the same names, and that at no distant intervals But the very passage before us, the speech of Gamaliel and its historical argument, affords a sufficient instance Gamaliel adduced the case of Judas the Galilean as an illustration of an unsuccessful religious movement. Every one admits that here at least Josephus and the Acts of the Apostles are at one. Judas the Gaulonite as Josephus styles him in one place, or the Galilean as he calls him in another place, was the founder of the sect of the Zealots, who "have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only ruler and Lord" (Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XVIII., i. 6). Judas was defeated at the time of the taxing under Cyrenius, and yet more than forty-five years later we find his sons Simon and James suffering crucifixion under the Romans because they were following their father's example.[1]

Another explanation has also been offered. It has been suggested that Theudas was simply another name for one of the many rebels whom Josephus mentions,—for Simon, for instance, who had been a slave of Herod the Great, and had upon his death

[1] The family of Gamaliel himself illustrates the principle for which we are contending, viz., that families have a tendency to reproduce exactly the same political and religious tendencies. Gamaliel himself was grandson of the Jewish patriarch Hillel I., who presided over the Sanhedrin long before the Christian era. Gamaliel's grandson, Gamaliel II., was president of the Sanhedrin during the first twenty years of the second century. He was distinguished by the same liberal principles as characterised his grandfather. Gamaliel II. was succeeded by his son Simon. So that the presidency of the Sanhedrin continued in the same family for nearly two centuries. It is a notable fact, and not without its bearing on some modern controversies, that the Jewish

headed a revolt against authority. Either explanation is quite tenable, as opposed to the view which represents St. Luke as committing a gross historical error. And we are the more justified in offering these suggestions when we reflect upon the numberless instances where modern research has confirmed, and is every year confirming, the minute accuracy of this writer, who doubtless derived his information concerning what passed in the Sanhedrin, on this occasion, from St. Paul, who either as a member of the council or a favourite pupil of Gamaliel may have been present listening to the debates, or even sharing in the final decisions.[1]

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canon of the Old Testament was not finally closed till the time of the presidency of Gamaliel II., that is, about the year 117 A.D. "Up to this time the members of the Sanhedrin themselves, in whom was vested the power to fix the canon, disputed the canonicity of certain portions of the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus the school of Shammai excluded Ecclesiastes and the Canticles from the text of Holy Writ, declaring that they proceeded from Solomon's uninspired wisdom. It was the Sanhedrin at Zabne which decided that these books are inspired, and that they form part of the canon."—See Mr. Ginsburg's article on Gamaliel II. in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. ii., p. 607.

[1] Upon the question of the historical accuracy of the Acts of the Apostles, the appendix to the late Bishop Lightfoot's collected essays on *Supernatural Religion* (London, 1889) should be consulted. The opening paragraph bears directly upon our point. "In a former volume M. Renan declared his opinion that the author of the third Gospel and the Acts was verily and indeed (*bien réellement*) a disciple of St. Paul. . . . Such an expression of opinion, proceeding from a not too conservative critic, is significant; and this view of the authorship, I cannot doubt, will be the final verdict of the future, as it has been the unbroken tradition of the past. But at a time when attacks on the genuineness of the work have been renewed, it may not be out of place to call attention to some illustrations of the narrative which recent discoveries have brought to light. No ancient work affords so many tests of veracity, for no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, topography, whether Jewish, or Greek, or Roman."

Let us now turn from the purely historical side of Gamaliel's speech, and view it from a spiritual standpoint.

The address of Gamaliel was so favourable to the Apostles that it has helped to surround his name and memory with much legendary lore. It was the tradition of the ancient Greek Church from the fifth century that he was converted to Christianity and baptized, along with his son Abibus and Nicodemus, by St. Peter and St. John.[1] This story of Gamaliel's secret adherence to Christianity goes even much farther back. There is a curious Christian novel or romance, which dates back to close upon the year 200, called the *Clementine Recognitions.* We find the same tradition in the sixty-fifth chapter of the first book of these *Recognitions.*[2] But the sacred narrative itself gives us no hint of all this, contenting itself with setting forth the prudent advice which Gamaliel gave to the assembled council. It was wise advice, and well would it have been for the world if influential religious and political teachers in all ages had given similar counsel. Gamaliel was a man of large scholarship, combined with a wide mind, and he had learned that time is a great solvent, and the greatest of tests. Beneath its influence the most

[1] We learn this from the *Bibliotheca* of Photius, Cod. 171. Photius was a very learned Greek patriarch of the ninth century. He was a diligent student, and made an analysis of every book he read. These extracts have been gathered into one volume called his *Bibliotheca* or *Library*, and can now be consulted in any collection of the Greek fathers. Photius reports his story about Gamaliel and Nicodemus from two earlier writers, Chrysippus and Lucian, presbyters of Jerusalem.

[2] For an account of the Clementine *Recognitions* see Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the N. T.*, 4th ed., pp. 14-19, 373-75. Translations, both of the *Recognitions* and *Homilies*, can be consulted in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library.

pretentious schemes, the most promising of structures, fade away if built upon the sand of human wisdom, while opposition only tends to consolidate and develop those that are built upon the foundation of Divine strength and power. The policy of patience recommended by Gamaliel is a wise one, either for the Church or for the state, in things spiritual and things secular alike. And yet it is one from which the natural man recoils with an instinctive repugnance. It speaks well for the Jewish Sanhedrin that on this occasion they yielded accord to the advice of their president. We are glad to recognise this spirit in these men, where we so often have to find matter for blame. Well would it have been for the Church and for the credit of Christianity had the spirit which moved even the Sadducean majority in the Jewish council been allowed to prevail; and yet how little have the men of tolerant mind been regarded in moments of temporary triumph such as the Sanhedrin just then enjoyed. Gamaliel's advice, "Refrain from these men and let them alone. If the work be of man it will be overthrown; if of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them," strikes a blow at the policy of persecution, which is essentially a policy of impatience. The intolerant man is an impatient man, not willing to imitate the Divine gentleness and long-suffering, which waits, endures, and bears with the sins and ignorance of the children of men. And the Church of Christ, when she became intolerant, as she did as soon as ever Constantine placed within her reach the sword of human power, forgot the lesson of the Divine patience, and reaped within herself, in a shallow religion, in a poorer life, in a restrained intellectual and spiritual grasp, the due reward of those who had fallen away from an

imitation of the Divine example to a mere human level. It is sad to see, for instance, in the case of a man so thoroughly spiritual as St. Augustine was, how easily he fell into this human infirmity, how quickly he became intolerant when the secular arm was ranged on the side of his own opinions. The Church in his own boyhood, during the days of Julian, had to strive against the intolerance of the pagans; the orthodox, who upheld the Catholic view of the nature of the Godhead and the scriptural doctrine of the Holy Trinity, had to struggle against the intolerance of the Arians. Yet as soon as power was placed in St. Augustine's own hand he thought it right to exercise compulsion against those who differed from him.

It was exactly the same in later days. Men may take up commentators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike. There they will find many remarks, acute. devout, heart-searching, but very few of them will be found to have arrived at the mental fairness and balance involved in those words, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone." Cornelius a Lapide was a Jesuit commentator of those times. He wrote many valuable expositions of Holy Scripture, including one dealing with this book of the Acts, filled with thoughts suggestive and stimulating. It is, however, almost ludicrous to notice how he strives to evade the force of Gamaliel's words, and to escape the application of them to his own Protestant opponents. The Sanhedrin were quite right, he thinks, in adopting Gamaliel's advice, and in showing themselves tolerant of the apostolic preaching because the Apostles worked miracles; and so, though they were unconvinced, still they had just reason to suspend their judgment. But as for the Protestants

of his time, they were heretics; they were the opponents of the Church, the bride of Christ, and therefore Gamaliel's words had no application to them; as if the very question that was raised by the Protestants was not this—whether Cornelius a Lapide himself and his Jesuit brethren did not represent Antichrist, and whether the Protestants were not the true Church of God, who therefore on his own principles were quite justified in persecuting their Romish opponents. It is very difficult to get men to acknowledge their own fallibility. Every party, when triumphant, believes that it has a monopoly of truth, and has a Divine right of persecution; and every party when downcast and in adversity sees and admires the beauties of toleration. Verily societies, churches, families, as well as individuals, have good right diligently to pray, "In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us," for never are men in greater spiritual danger than when prosperity leads them to vote themselves infallible, and to practise intolerance towards their fellow-men on account of their intellectual or religious opinions.

The sentiment of Gamaliel on this occasion may however be pushed to a mischievous extreme. He advised the Sanhedrin to exercise patience and self-control, but he did not apparently go any farther. He did not recommend them to adopt the noblest course, which would have been unprejudiced examination into the claims put forward by the Christian teachers. Gamaliel's advice was good, it was perhaps the best he could have given, or at least which could have been expected under the circumstances, but it was not the highest or noblest conceivable. It was the kind of advice always given by men who do not wish to commit themselves untimely, but who are waiters upon Providence,

postponing their decision as to which side they shall join until they first see which side will win. Opportunists, the French call them; men who are sitting upon the fence, we in homelier phrase designate them. It is well to be prudent in our actions, because true prudence is only Christian wisdom, and such wisdom will always lead us to take the most effectual ways of doing good. But then prudence may be pushed to the extreme of moral cowardice, or at least the name of prudence may be used as a cloak for a contemptible desire to stand well with all parties, and thereby advance our own selfish interests. Prudence should be united with moral courage; it should be ready to take the unpopular side, and to champion truth and righteousness even when in a depressed and lowly condition. It was easy enough to side with Christ when the multitude cried, "Hosanna in the Highest." But the test of deepest love and unfailing devotion was when the women stood by the cross, and when the Magdalen sought out the grave in the garden that she might anoint the dead body of her loved Lord.

Finally, let us just notice the conduct of the Apostles under those circumstances. The Apostles were freed from the pressing danger of death, but they did not entirely escape. The Sanhedrin were logically inconsistent. They refrained from putting the Apostles to death, as Gamaliel advised, but they flogged them as Roman laws permitted; and a Jewish disciplinary flogging, when forty stripes save one were inflicted, was so severe that death sometimes resulted from it.[1] Man

[1] St. Paul, as he tells us in 2 Cor. xi. 24, was five times flogged by the Jews. When the Jews inflicted this punishment the culprit was tied to a pillar in the synagogue; the executioner, armed with a scourge of three distinct lashes, inflicted the punishment; while an official stand-

is a curiously inconsistent being, and the Sanhedrin showed on this occasion that they had their own share of this weakness. Gamaliel advised not to kill the Apostles, but let time work out the Divine purposes either of success or failure. They adopt the first part of his advice, but are not willing to allow Providence to develop His designs without their interference, and so by their stripes endeavour to secure that failure shall attend the apostolic efforts. But it was all in vain. The Apostles were living under a realized sense of heavenly things. The love of Christ, and communion with Christ and the Spirit of Christ, so raised them above all earthly surroundings that what things seemed loss and shame and grief to others were by them counted highest joy, because they looked at them from the side of God and eternity. Human threats availed nothing with men animated by such a spirit,—nay, rather as proofs of the opposition of the evil one, they only quickened their zeal, so that "every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." How wondrously life would be transformed for us all did we view its changes and chances, its sorrows and its pains, as the Apostles regarded them. Poverty and disgrace, undeserved loss and suffering, all alike would be transfigured into surpassing glory when endured for Christ's sake, while our powers of labour and work, and our active zeal in the holiest of causes, would be quickened, because, like them, we should walk and live and toil in the loved presence of One who is invisible.

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ing by read selected portions of the law between each stroke. Thirteen strokes of the threefold scourge was equivalent to the thirty-nine stripes. This was the flogging the Apostles suffered on this occasion.

CHAPTER XIII

PRIMITIVE DISSENSIONS AND APOSTOLIC PRECAUTIONS.

"Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word."—ACTS vi. 1-4.

THE sixth chapter of the Acts, and the election of the Seven, mark a distinct advance in the career of the early Church. This sixth chapter is like the twelfth of Genesis and the introduction of Abraham upon the stage of sacred history. We feel at once as if the narrative of Genesis had come into contact with modern times, leaving the mysterious period of darkness all behind. So is it with the Acts of the Apostles. The earliest days of the primitive Church were quite unlike all modern experience. The Church had received a great blessing and a wondrous revelation, and had been enriched with marvellous powers. But just as men act when they have experienced a surpassing joy or a tremendous calamity,—they are upset for a time, they do not realize their

position, they do not take all the circumstances in at once, nor can they quite settle what their future course shall be; they must get a little way distant from the joy or the sorrow before they make their future arrangements,—so was it with the Apostles during that space of time which elapsed from the Pentecostal outpouring down to the election of the Seven. We are so accustomed to think of the Apostles as inspired men, that we forget that inspiration did not destroy their natural powers or infirmities, but rather must have acted in consonance with the laws of their constitution. The Apostles must, to a certain extent, have been upset by the extraordinary events they had witnessed. They sought and found daily guidance in the power of the Spirit; but they had made no settled plans, had not compared or arranged their ideas, had formed no scheme of doctrine or teaching, had realized nothing concerning the future of the society they were unconsciously building up under the Divine leading. God had His plans; the ascended Lord had spoken to the Apostles concerning the future of the Kingdom of Heaven; but it would be making the Apostles more than men of like passions and like infirmities with ourselves to imagine that during those stirring and eventful days they had consciously realized the whole scheme of Christian doctrine and government. That period of a few months—for it could not have been more—was a period of Divine chaos, out of which the final settlement of the Church of God began slowly to evolve itself under the direction of God the Holy Ghost. How long, it may be asked, did this period of unsettlement last? A question which resolves itself into the further one bearing directly on our present subject,—what was the date of the election and subsequent martyrdom of

Stephen? The answer to this throws much light on the apostolic history and the events recorded in the first five chapters of this book.

I. St. Stephen was put to death some time in the year 37 A.D., after Pontius Pilate had been recalled from the government of Palestine, and before his successor had arrived to take up the reins of power.[1] The Jewish authorities took advantage of the interregnum in order to gratify their spite against the eminent orator who was doing so much damage to their cause. Under ordinary circumstances the Jewish Sanhedrin could not put a man to death unless they had received the fiat of the Roman authorities. Now, however, during this interval, there was no supreme authority from whom this fiat could be secured, and so they seized the opportunity and executed Stephen as a blasphemer, according to the method prescribed in the law of Moses. This happened in the year 37 A.D., about four years after the Crucifixion. We must, however, observe another point. During the latter years of his administration, Pontius Pilate had been acting in a most tyrannical manner. This fact explains a circumstance which must strike the most casual reader of the Acts. We there read that the supreme Jewish council made two attempts to restrain the Apostles; the first after the healing of the cripple at the Temple Gate, and the second when Gamaliel dissuaded them from their purposes of blood. After that they allowed the Apostles to pursue their course without any hostility. This appears to the casual reader more striking, more difficult to understand, than it was in reality. We are now obliged to think of Judaism and Christianity as opposed and

[1] See the authorities for the chronology of this period as given in Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, pp. 247-53.

mutually exclusive religions; we cannot conceive of a man being a Jew and a Christian at the same time. But it was not so with the Apostles and their followers at the period of which we are writing. This may seem contradictory to what I have elsewhere stated as to the antagonistic character of the two religions. But the apparent inconsistency is easily explained. As full-blown and realized systems, Judaism and Christianity are inconsistent. The one was a bud, the other an expanded flower. The same individual bulb cannot be at the same moment a bud and a flower. But the Apostles had not as yet realized Christianity as a full-blown system, nor grasped all its consequences. There was no inconsistency when they made a conjoint profession of Judaism and Christianity. The Apostles and their followers were all scrupulous observers of the law of Moses; and no dwellers in Jerusalem were more regular attendants at the Temple worship than the persons who had as yet no distinct name, and were known only as followers of the Prophet of Nazareth. To take an illustration from modern ecclesiastical history, the Apostles and the early Jerusalem Church must have been simply known to the Jewish authorities, just as the first Methodists at Oxford were known to the Church authorities of John Wesley's earlier days, as stricter members of the Church of England than the usual run of people were. This fact alone lessens the difficulty we might find in accounting for the statements made as to the continued activity of the Apostles, and the freedom they enjoyed even after they had been solemnly warned by the Sanhedrin. Neither the Apostles themselves nor the Jewish council recognised as yet any religious opposition in the teaching of Peter and his brethren. The Apostles themselves had not

yet formulated their ideas nor perceived whither their principles would ultimately lead them. No one indeed would have been more surprised than themselves had they foreseen the antagonistic position into which they would be ultimately forced; and as for the Sanhedrin, the only charge they brought against the Apostles was not a religious one at all, but merely that they were challenging the conduct and decision of the authorities concerning the execution of Jesus Christ, and, as the High Priest put it, "intend to bring this Man's blood upon us."[1] But then history reveals to us some other facts which completely explain the difficulty and vindicate the historical accuracy of the sacred narrative. St. Stephen was put to death in the year 37. At that time he may have been acting as a deacon for two, or even three, years, during which Christian teaching and views made very rapid progress, all unopposed by the Jewish authorities, simply because their attention was concentrated on other topics of much more pressing interest. Pilate was appointed governor of Palestine in 26 A.D. He ruled it for ten years, till the end of 36 A.D., when he was recalled. God causes all things to work together for good, and overrules even state changes to the development of His purposes. Pilate's whole period of rule was, as I have already said, marked by tyranny; but the concluding years were the worst. The members of the Sanhedrin were then specially excited by two actions which touched themselves most keenly. He seized on the accumulated

[1] The Church during its earliest years called itself merely the Way, not recognising the term Christian at all. This is brought out clearly in the Revised Version, as in Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, 23, xxiv. 14. The adoption of the name Christian probably marked the more distinct separation of the Church from the synagogue.

proceeds of the Temple-tax of two drachmas, about eighteen pence, paid by every Jew throughout the world, which then amounted to a vast sum, expending it in making an aqueduct for the supply of Jerusalem. This action affected the pecuniary resources of the Jewish authorities. But he attacked them on a dearer point still, for he set up the images of the emperor in the Holy City, and thus wounded them in their religious feelings, introducing the abomination of desolation into the most sacred places.[1]

All the attention of the priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the people, was concentrated upon the violent deeds of Pilate. They had no time to think of the Apostles,—who, indeed, must themselves have shared in the national enthusiasm and universal hostility which Pilate's attempts excited. A common opposition stilled, for the time, the internal strife and controversy about the prophet of Nazareth which had, for a little, rent asunder the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Let us now repeat the dates to which we have attained. St. Stephen was executed in 37 A.D.; his election took place probably in 34 A.D. The first seven chapters of the Acts set before us, then, all we know of the history of the earliest four years of the Church's life and work; and yet though very briefly told, that history tallies with what we learn from writers like Josephus and Philo.

II. Let us now return to the text of our narrative. This sixth chapter offers a very useful glimpse into the inner life of the primitive Church. It shows us what led up to the election of the Seven in these words: "Now in these days, when the number of the disciples

[1] See Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XVIII., iii., 1, 2.

was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

(*a*) The election sprang out of the multiplying, and the multiplying begat a murmuring among the disciples. There is here teaching for the Church of all time, plain and evident to every reader, a lesson which history has repeated from age to age. Increase of numbers does not always mean increase of happiness, increase of devotion, increase of true spiritual life, but has often brought increase of trouble and discontent alone. What a lesson of patient submission under present trials the wise man may here read. God has made all things double one against another; and when He bestows such notable increase as He granted to the apostolic Church, He adds thereto some counterbalancing disadvantage to keep His people low and make them humble. Undiluted joy, unmitigated success, is not to be the portion of God's people while tabernacling here below. How often has the lesson been repeated in their experience of the past as in our own personal experience as well!

The trial of the apostolic Church was typical of the trials which awaited future ages. The Church in the Diocletian persecution, for instance, was wasted and torn. The records of that last great trial through which the Church passed, just prior to her final triumph over Paganism, are lighted up by the fires of the most determined attempt ever made to crush the faith of the Crucified One. How often during that last persecution God's faithful ones must have wept in secret over the ruin of the holy places and the threatened destruction of the faith! Yet the trials of the hours of adversity were as nothing compared with the dangers which

beset the Church when the faith triumphed under Constantine, and the multitude of the disciples was increased and multiplied by the power of imperial patronage. The trials of the day of persecution were external, and utterly powerless to affect the spiritual life of Christ's mystical body. The trials of a multiplying and enlarging Church were internal; they arose from unbelief, and hypocrisy, and want of Christian love, and were destructive of the life of God in the human soul. The dangers of success, the subtle temptations of prosperity, making us proud, contemptuous of others, self-conscious, dependent wholly upon man and independent of God, are the lessons, ecclesiastical, social, and personal, pressed upon us by the opening words of this sixth chapter.

(*b*) These words, again, correct a popular mistake, and reproduce a warning of our Master too often forgotten. When the disciples were increasing, and the hearts of the Apostles all aglow with the success vouchsafed them, "a murmuring arose between the Grecian Jews and the Hebrews." What a glimpse we get here into the very heart and centre of early Christian social life. It is often the hardest task in historical researches to get such a glimpse as here is given. We know the outer life of societies, of families, of dynasties. We see them in their external form and symmetry: we behold them in their company dress and in their public appearances; but till we get to know and realize their common every-day life, how they ate, drank, slept, how their social intercourse was maintained, we fail to grasp the most important side of their existence. The primitive Church is often thought of and spoken of as if its social and spiritual life were wholly unlike our own; as if sin and infirmity were entirely absent,

and perfect holiness there prevailed. This expression, "Now in these days there arose a murmuring," shows us that the presence of supernatural gifts, the power of working miracles and speaking with other tongues, did not raise the spiritual level of individual believers above that we find in the Church of the present day. The distribution of alms is always attended by jealousies and disputes, rendering the work one of the most unpleasant tasks which can be undertaken by any man. No matter how earnestly one strives to be fair and just, no matter how diligently one may seek to balance claim against claim and righteously to satisfy the wants of those who seek relief, still there will always be minds that will never be content, and will strive to detect injustice and wrong and favouritism, no matter how upright the intention may be. What a comfort to God's servant striving to do his duty is the study of this sixth chapter of the Acts! Fretting and worry, weary days and sleepless nights, are often the only reward which the Christian philanthropist receives in return for his exertions. But here comes in the Acts of the Apostles to cheer. It was just the same with the Apostles, for they must have been the chief almoners or distributers of the Church's common fund prior to the election of the Seven. The Apostles themselves did not escape the accusation of favouritism, and we may be well content to bear and suffer what the Apostles were compelled to endure. Let us only take heed that like them we suffer wrongfully, and that our conscience testify that we have striven to do everything in the sight of the Lord Jesus Christ; and then, disregarding all human murmuring and criticism, we should calmly proceed upon our work, in no way discouraged because the recipients of Christian bounty

still act as even the primitive Christians did. This is one important lesson we gain from this passage.

(*c*) We may, again, learn another great truth from this incident, and that is, that the primitive Church was no ideal communion, but a society with failings and weaknesses and discontent, exactly like those which exist in the Church of our own times. The favourite argument with controversialists of the Church of Rome, when trying to draw proselytes from among Protestants, is, as logicians say, of an *à priori* type. They will enlarge upon the importance of religion and religious truth, and upon the awful consequences which will result from a mistake on such a vital question, and then they will argue that God must have constituted a living infallible guide on such an important topic, and that guide is in their opinion the Pope, as the head of the Catholic Church. The Scriptures are full of warnings—unnoticed warnings they often are, but still they are full of them—as to the untrustworthy character of all such kind of arguments. In this sixth chapter, for instance, the thoughtful and meditative student can see a specimen of these providential admonitions, and a reason for its insertion in the sacred story. Christ came to establish the Christian Church upon earth. For this purpose He lived and suffered and rose again. For this purpose He sent forth the Third Person of the Holy Trinity to lead and guide and dwell in His Church; and surely, *à priori*, we might as well conclude that in the Church so founded, so guided, so ruled by Peter and the rest of the Apostles, there would have been found no such thing as favouritism, or murmuring, or discontent,—sentiments which might exist in the unregenerate world, but which should find no place in the kingdom of the Spirit. But, when

we turn to the sacred record of Christ's sayings, and the inspired history of Christ's Church, we find that all our *à priori* presumptions and all our logical anticipations are put to flight, for the Master warns us in the thirteenth of St. Matthew, when speaking His wondrous parables concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, that sin and imperfection will ever find their place in His Church; and then the history of the Acts of the Apostles comes in to confirm the inspired prophecy, and we see from this chapter how the primitive Church of Christ was torn and racked with mere earthly feelings and mere human infirmities, like the ordinary worldly societies which existed all around; "there arose a murmuring" even in the Church where Apostles taught, where the Holy Ghost dwelt, and where the Pentecostal gifts were displayed. The occasion of the murmuring, too, is noteworthy and prophetic. It was like the trial under which man fell and by which Christ was tempted. It was a mere material temptation. Even in the primitive Church, living as it did in the region and presence of the supernatural, expecting every day and hour the return of the ascended Lord, even there material considerations entered, and the world and the things thereof found a place, and caused divisions where they would seem to have been strictly excluded by the very conditions of the Church's existence. The Church and the world there touched and influenced one another; and so it must be always. There is a world indeed against which the Church must ever protest—the world of impure lusts and wicked desires, the world of which Paganism was the presiding genius; but then there is a world in which the Church must exist and with which it must deal, the world which God has created and ordained, the world of human society and human

wants, feelings, desires, appetites. With these the Church must ever come in contact. Monasticism and asceticism have endeavoured indeed in the past to get rid of this world. They cut men and women off from marriage and separated them from society, and reduced human wants to a minimum; and yet nature asserted itself, and the corruptions of monasticism have been a divinely-ordered protest against foolish attempts to separate between things spiritual and things secular, between the Church founded by Christ and the world created by God.[1] The murmuring arose

[1] The term world is one that has very various meanings in Scripture, and good people have often made serious practical mistakes by confounding these meanings. I once met a serious young man disposed to the views of the "Brethren," who gravely told me that he thought it wrong to admire beautiful scenery because it was written, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." There are three distinct uses of the term "world" in Scripture: as expressing, (1) the material earth, Psalm xxiv. 1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein;" (2) the people on the earth, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" for it; (3) the impure lusts and desires which found full scope under paganism, and still intrude themselves into the kingdom of Christ, 1 John ii. 15, 16, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." It is evident that if we take the bad meaning of world in this last passage and apply it to the other two we shall end in the old Manichean view that the material world and the men on it are the handiwork of a bad or inferior deity, and therefore should be entirely rejected. I know that some very grave and serious people have fallen into this confusion, and have thus banished all sweetness and light from their own lives and from those of their families. It is a curious circumstance, too, that we read in ancient writers that the Manichean heresy always recommended itself o persons of a similar temperament, who in consequence led lives of a very strict and puritanical type. They looked upon the world and all that was in it as the devil's creation. How then could they smile upon, love, or enjoy anything therein? See the article "Manicheans" in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*

on this occasion because the Apostles made no such mistake, but recognised fearlessly that the Church of Christ took cognizance of such a question as the daily distribution and the temporal wants of its disciples. The apostolic Church did not disdain a mere economic question, and yet the Church of our own time has been slow enough to follow its example; but, thank God, it is learning more and more of its duty in this respect. The time has been when nothing was considered worthy of the notice of the Christian pulpit or of Church synods and Church courts save purely spiritual and doctrinal questions. The vast subjects of education, of the social life, of the amusements of the people, the methods of legislation or statesmanship, were thought outside the region of Christian activity, and were utterly neglected or else left wholly to those who made no profession at least of being guided by Christian principle. But now we have learned the important truth that the Church is a Divine leaven placed in the mass of human society to permeate it through and through; and perhaps the present danger is that the clergy should forget the apostolic warning, true for every age, that while the Church in its totality, priests and people, should take an active interest in these questions, and strive to mould the whole life of man on Christian principles, it is not at the same time "fit that the ministry should forsake the word of God and serve tables."

III. But we have not yet done with this murmuring or with the lessons it furnishes for the Church of the future. What lay at the basis of this murmuring, and of the jealousy thereby indicated? "There arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews;" a racial question developed itself, and racial, or perhaps we should rather say, in this case, social and

linguistic, differences found place in the apostolic Church, and gave rise to serious quarrels even where the Spirit in fullest measure and in extraordinary power was enjoyed. There was bitter dissension between Jews and Samaritans, though they believed in the same God and reverenced the same revelation. Political circumstances in the past sufficiently explain that quarrel. There was almost, if not quite, as bitter hostility between the Grecians and the Hebrews, because they spoke different languages and practised diverse customs, and that though they worshipped in the same temple and belonged to the same nation. The origin of these differences in the Christian Church of Jerusalem goes back to a very distant period. Here comes in the use of the Apocrypha, "which the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners." If we wish to understand the course of events in the Acts we must refer to the books of Maccabees, where is told the romantic story of the struggle of the Jews against the Greek kings of Syria, who tried to force them into conformity with the religion of Greece, which then was counted the religion of civilization and of culture. The result was that the intensely national party became bitterly hostile to everything pertaining to Greece and its civilization. The Jews of Palestine of that period became like the purely Celtic Irish of the Reformation epoch. The Irish identified the Reformation with England and English influence, just as the Jews identified Paganism with Greece and Syria, and Greek influence; and the result was that the Irish became the most intensely ultramontane nation, and the Palestinian Jews became the most intensely narrow and prejudiced nation of their time. The Palestinian or Hebrew Jews, speaking the Aramaeic or Chaldee tongue, scorned

Greek language and all traces of Greek civilization, while the Jews of the Dispersion, specially those of Alexandria, strove to recommend the Jewish religion to the Gentile world, whose civilization and culture they appreciated, and whose language they used. The opposition of the Hebrew to the Grecian Jews was very bitter, and expressed itself in language which has come down to us in the Talmudic writings. "Cursed be he who teacheth his son the learning of the Greeks," was a saying among the Hebrews; while again, we hear of Rabban Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, St. Paul's teacher, who used to embody his hatred of the Grecians in the following story: "There were a thousand boys in my father's school, of whom five hundred learned the law and five hundred the wisdom of the Greeks; and there is not one of the latter now alive, excepting myself here and my uncle's son in Asia."[1] Heaven itself was supposed by the Hebrews to have plainly declared its hostility against their Grecian opponents. Hence, naturally, arose the same divisions at Jerusalem. There were in that city nearly five hundred synagogues, a considerable proportion of which belonged to the Grecian Jews. All classes and all the synagogues, Hebrew and Grecian alike, contributed their quota to the earliest converts won by the Apostles; and these converts brought their old jealousies and oppositions with them into the Church of Christ. The Hebrew or the Grecian Jew of yesterday could not forget, to-day, because he had embraced a belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, all his old feelings and his old hereditary quarrels, and hence sprang the Christian dissensions of

[1] Lightfoot's *Horæ Heb.*, Acts vi. 1, where there is a long and learned discussion, extending over several pages, upon the distinction between the Hebrew and the Grecian Jews.

which we read, prophetic of so many similar racial and social and linguistic dissensions in the Church down to the present time. The Acts of the Apostles is a kind of magic mirror for Church history. In the olden times men dreamt of a magic mirror into which one could look and see the course of their future life depicted. We can see something of the same in this inspired book. The bitter dissensions which racial and linguistic differences have made in the Church of every age are here depicted in miniature. The quarrels between East and West, between Greeks and Latins, between Latins and Teutons, between Teuton and Celt, between Roman Catholic and Protestant, between the Whites and Negroes, between European Christians and Hindoo converts; the scandalous scenes still enacted round the Holy Place at Jerusalem, where peace is kept between nominal Christians only by the intervention of Mahometan soldiers,—all turn upon the same points and embody the same principles, and may best find solution upon the lines laid down by the Apostles. And what were these lines? They laid down that there are diversities of functions and of work in the Church of Christ; there is a ministry of the word, and there is a serving of tables. One class should not absorb every function; for if it does, the highest function of all, the ministry of the word and prayer, will inevitably suffer. Well, indeed, would it have been had this lesson been far more laid to heart. How many a schism and rent in the visible Church of Christ has been caused because no work, no spiritual function, was found for a newly-awakened layman anxious to do something for Him who had done so much for his soul. The principle here laid down in germ is a very fruitful one, suitable for every age. A new crisis, a fresh

departure, an unexpected need, has arisen, and a new organization is therefore at once devised by the Apostles; and well would it have been had their example found closer imitation. We have been too much in the habit of looking upon the Church of Christ as if it were once for all stereotyped in apostolic times, and as if there were nothing to be done in the living present save to adapt these ancient institutions to our modern needs. The Roman Catholic Church has been in many respects more true to apostolic principles than the children of the Reformation. With all her intense conservatism Rome has never hesitated to develop new organizations as new needs have arisen, and that in the boldest manner. It has often been remarked that the Church of Rome would never have lost John Wesley and the Wesleyans as the Church of England did. She would have put a brown cassock upon him, and girded him with a rope, and sent him forth as the head of a new order, to do the work to which he felt impelled and for which God had qualified him. Experience has taught us, however, that we cannot safely neglect apostolic precedent; and the warning implied in the words of the Apostles, "it is not fit that we should forsake the word of God and serve tables," has been amply fulfilled. The highest ministry of the word has been injured by the accumulation of all public work in the Church on one class alone. What minister of Jesus Christ does not feel that, even with the wider and more apostolic views now prevalent, with all the recognition of the service which godly Christian laymen render, the old tradition is still strong, and clergymen are too absorbed in the mere serving of tables, to the neglect of their higher functions? The laity often complain of the poor, thin, meagre character of the preaching to which

they are compelled to listen; but how can it be otherwise when they demand so much purely secular service, so much serving of tables from those whose great work is to teach? The Church of England, in her service for the ordination of priests, demands from the candidates whether they will devote themselves to the study of the Word of God, and such other studies as bear upon the same. I often wonder how her clergy are now to fulfil this solemn vow, when frequently they have not a night in the week at home, save perhaps Saturday evening, and when, from early morning to late at night, all their energies are swallowed up in the work of schools, and clubs, and charitable organizations, and parochial visitation, leaving little time and still less energy for the work of meditation and thought and study. The clergy are the Lord's prophets, watchmen upon the walls of Zion. It is their great business to explain the Lord's will, to translate the ideas of the Bible into the language of modern life, to apply the Divine principles of doctrine and discipline laid down in the Bible to the ever-varying wants of our complex modern civilization; and how can this function be discharged unless there be time for reading and for thinking, so as to gain a true notion of what are these modern wants, and to find out how the eternal principles of the Scriptures are to be applied to them? We require a great deal more organized assistance in the work of the Church, and then, when that assistance is forthcoming, we may expect and demand that the highest ministry of all, "the ministry of the Word and prayer," shall be discharged with greater efficiency and blessing. The Apostles in meeting this crisis, laid down a law of true development and living growth in the divine society. The Church of Christ is ever to have the power to

organize herself in face of new departures, while at the same time they proclaim the absolute necessity and the perpetual obligation of the Christian ministry in its highest aspect; for surely if even for Apostles it was needful that their whole time should be devoted to the ministry of the word of God and prayer, and the Church of that time, with all its wondrous gifts, demanded such a ministry, there ought to exist in the modern Church also an order of men wholly separated unto those solemn duties.

IV. The Apostles having determined upon the creation of a new organization to deal with a new need, then appeal to the people for their assistance, and call upon them to select the persons who shall be its members; but they, at the same time, reserve their own rights and authority, and, when the selection has been made, claim the power of ordination and appointment for themselves. The people nominated while the Apostles appointed. The Apostles took the most effective plan to quiet the trouble which had arisen when they took the people into their confidence. The Church has been often described as the mother of modern freedom. The councils of old time were the models and forerunners of modern parliaments. The councils and synods of the Church set an example of open discussion and of legislative assemblies in ages when tyrannical authority had swallowed up every other vestige of liberty. The Church from the beginning, and in the Acts of the Apostles, clearly showed that its government was not to be an absolute clerical despotism, but a free Christian republic, where clergy and people were to take counsel together. It is a noteworthy thing indeed, that even in the Roman Catholic Church, where the exclusive claims of the clergy have been most pressed, the recog-

nition of the rights of the laity in the matter of Church councils and debates has found place down to modern times. The representatives of the Emperor and other Christian princes took their seats in the Council of Trent, jointly with bishops and other ecclesiastics; and it was only at the Vatican Council of 1870 that this last lingering trace of lay rights finally disappeared. The Apostles laid down by their action the principle of Church freedom, and the mutual rights of clergy and people; but they also gave a very practical hint for the peaceful management of organizations, whether ecclesiastical, or social, or political. They knew what was the right thing to do, but they did not impose their will by the mere exercise of authority; they took counsel with the people, and the result was that a speedy solution of all their difficulties was arrived at. How many a quarrel in life would be avoided, how many a rough place would be made smooth, were the apostolic example always followed. Men naturally resist a law imposed from without without any appearance of consultation with them or of sanction on their part; but men willingly yield obedience to laws, even though they may dislike them, which have been passed with their assent and appeal to their reason. In Church matters especially would this rule apply, and the example of the Apostles be most profitably followed. Autocratic action on the part of the clergy in small matters has often destroyed the unity and harmony of congregations, and has planted roots of bitterness which have ruined ministerial usefulness. While steadily maintaining great fundamental principles, a little tact and thought, a wise condescension to human feeling, will often win the day, and carry measures which would otherwise be vigorously resisted.

Finally, the Apostles enunciate the principles which should guide the Church in its selection of officials, specially when they have to deal with the temporal concerns of the Society. "Look ye out therefore from among you seven men of good report." Attempts have been made to explain why the number was fixed at seven. Some have asserted that it was so determined because it was a sacred number, others because there were now seven congregations in Jerusalem, or seven thousand converts. Perhaps, however, the true reason was a more commonplace one, and that was that seven is a very convenient practical number. In case of a difference of opinion a majority can always be secured on one side or other, and all blocks avoided. The number seven was long maintained in connection with the order of deacons, in imitation of the apostolic institution. A council at Neo-Cæsarea, in the year 314, ordained that the number of seven deacons should never be exceeded in any city, while in the Church of Rome the same limitation prevailed from the second century down to the twelfth, so that the Roman Cardinals, who were the parochial clergy of Rome, numbered among them merely seven deacons down to that late period. The seven chosen by the primitive Church were to be men of good report because they were to be public functionaries, whose decisions were to allay commotions and murmurings; and therefore they must be men of weight, in whom the public had confidence. But, further, they must be men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom." Piety was not the only qualification; they must be wise, prudent, sound in judgment as well. Piety is no security for wisdom, just as in turn wisdom is no security for piety; but both must be combined in apostolic officials. The

Apostles thereby teach the Church of all time what are the qualifications necessary for effective administrators and officials. Even in charitable distributions and financial organizations the Church should hold up the high standard set before her by the Apostles, and seek out men actuated by religious principle, guided by religious truth, swayed by Divine love, the outcome of that Spirit whose grace and blessing are necessary for the due discharge of any office, whether of service, of charity, or of worship, in the Church of Jesus Christ; but possessed withal of strong common sense and vigorous intellectual power, for love and zeal separated from these often fall into mistakes which make religion and its adherents a laughing-stock to the world and a hindrance to the cause of truth and holiness. God can indeed make the weak things of this world to confound the high and mighty, but it would be presumptuous in us to think that we can do the same, and therefore must seek out the instruments best suited in every way to do God's work and accomplish His purposes.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. STEPHEN AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the Apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. . . . Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God."—ACTS vi. 5, 6; 8-11.

THE names of the seven chosen on the suggestion of the Apostles raises very naturally the question, To what office were they appointed? Did the seven elected on this occasion represent the first beginning of that office of deacon which is regarded as the third rank in the Church, bishops being first, and presbyters or priests second. It is agreed by all parties that the title of deacon is not given to them in the sixth chapter of the Acts, and yet such an unprejudiced and fair authority as Bishop Lightfoot, in his Essay on the Christian Ministry, maintains that the persons selected and ordained at this crisis constituted the first origin

of the diaconate as it is now known.[1] The Seven are not called, either here or wherever else they are mentioned in the Acts, by the name of deacons, though the word διακονεῖν (serve), which cannot be exactly rendered into English, as the noun deacon has no equivalent verb answering to it, is applied to the duties assigned to them. But all the best critics are agreed that the ordination of the Seven was the occasion of the rise of a new order and a new office in the Church, whose work dealt more especially with the secular side of the ministerial function. The great German critic Meyer, commenting on this sixth chapter, puts it well, though not so clearly as we should like. "From the first regular overseership of alms, the mode of appointment to which could not but regulate analogically the practice of the Church, was gradually developed the diaconate, which subsequently underwent further elaboration." This statement is somewhat obscure, and thoroughly after the manner of a German critic; let us develop it a little, and see what the process was whereby the distributers of alms to the widows of the earliest Church organization became the officials of whom St. Laurence

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, commenting on Philippians, p. 186, says: "I have assumed that the office thus established represents the later diaconate; for though this point has been much disputed, I do not see how the identity of the two can reasonably be called in question. If the word deacon does not occur in the passage, yet the corresponding verb and substantive, διακονεῖν and διακονία, are repeated more than once. The functions, moreover, are substantially those which devolved on the deacons of the earliest ages, and which still in theory, though not altogether in practice, form the primary duties of the office. Again, it seems clear, from the emphasis with which St. Luke dwells on the new institution, that he looks on the establishment of this office, not as an isolated incident, but as the institution of a new order of things in the Church. It is, in short, one of those representative facts of which the earlier part of his narrative is almost wholly made up."

of Rome in the third, and St. Athanasius of Alexandria in the fourth century were such eminent examples.

I. The institutions of the synagogue must necessarily have exercised a great influence over the minds of the Apostles and of their first converts. One fact alone vividly illustrates this idea. Christians soon began to call their places of assembly by the name of churches or the Lord's houses, but the old habit was at first too strong, and so the churches or congregations of the earliest Christians were called synagogues. This is evident even from the text of the Revised Version of the New Testament, for if we turn to the second chapter of the Epistle of James we read there, "If there come into your *synagogue* a man with a gold ring,"—showing that in St. James's day a Christian church was called a synagogue. This custom received some few years ago a remarkable confirmation from the records of travel and discovery. The Marcionites were a curious Christian sect or heresy which sprang up in the second century. They were intensely opposed to Judaism, and yet so strong was this tradition that even they seem to have retained, down to the fourth century, the name of synagogue as the title of their churches, for some celebrated French explorers have discovered in Syria an inscription, still in existence, carved over the door of a Marcionite church, dated A.D. 318, and that inscription runs thus: "The Synagogue of the Marcionites."[1]

[1] See Le Bas and Waddington's *Voyage Archéologique*, vol. iii., p. 583, *Inscriptions*, No. 2558; and Dr. Salmon's article on Marcion in Smith's *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, iii., 819. There is one passage in the Epistles which shows that not merely the name but the organization of synagogues was adopted by the early Church. In 1 Cor vi. 1 it is written, "Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbour, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" This verse

Now seeing that the force of tradition was so great as to compel even an anti-Jewish sect to call their meeting-houses by a Jewish name, we may be sure that the tradition of the institutions, forms, and arrangements of the synagogue must have been infinitely more potent with the earliest Christian believers, constraining them to adopt similar institutions in their own assemblies. Human nature is always the same, and the example of our own colonists sheds light upon the course of Church development in Palestine. When the Pilgrim Fathers went to America, they reproduced the English constitution and the English laws in that country with so much precision and accuracy that the expositions of law produced by American lawyers are studied with great respect in England. The American colonists reproduced the institutions and laws with which they were familiar, modifying them merely to suit their own peculiar circumstances; and so has it been all the world over wherever the Anglo-Saxon race has settled —they have done exactly the same thing. They have established states and governments modelled after the type of England, and not of France or Russia. So was it with the early Christians. Human nature

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cannot be rightly understood unless we remember that every synagogue had its own judicial tribunal, composed of ten men, who decided on Mondays and Thursdays every controversy among the Jews, inflicting immediate corporal punishment on the condemned. The Romans permitted and supported this domestic jurisdiction, just as the Turkish Empire, which has inherited so many of the Roman traditions, allows the Greek and other Eastern Churches to exercise jurisdiction over their own members in all questions touching religion, supporting their decisions by force if necessary. St. Paul, in this passage, wishes the members of the Christian synagogues to act like those of the Jewish, and avoid the scandal of Christians going to law with their brethren before pagans.

compelled them to fall back upon their first experience, and to develop under a Christian shape the institutions of the synagogue under which they had been trained. And now when we read the Acts we see that here lies the most natural explanation of the course of history, and specially of this sixth chapter. In the synagogue, as Dr. John Lightfoot expounds it in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* (Matt. iv. 23), the government was in the hands of the ruler and the council of elders or presbyters, while under them there were three almoners or deacons, who served in the same capacity as the Seven in superintending the charitable work of the congregation. The great work for which the Seven were appointed was distribution, and we shall see that this was ever maintained, and is still maintained, as the leading idea of the diaconate, though other and more directly spiritual work was at once added to their functions by St. Stephen and St. Philip.[1] Now just as our colonists brought English institutions and ideas with them wherever they settled, so was it with the missionaries who went forth from the Mother Church of Jerusalem. They carried the ideas and institutions with them which had been there sanctioned by the Apostles, and thus we find deacons mentioned in conjunction with bishops at Philippi, deacons joined with bishops in St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, and the

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, in his well-known Essay on the Christian Ministry, from which we have already quoted, does not admit any likeness between the office of the diaconate in the Church and any similar office in the synagogue. He refuses to recognise the Chazzan or sexton of the synagogue as in any sense typical of Christian deacons. But he has not noticed the three almoners or deacons attached to every synagogue, whom his seventeenth-century namesake, Dr. John Lightfoot, in his tract on synagogues (*Horæ Hebr.*, St. Matt. iv. 23), considers the origin of the Christian deacons.

existence of the institution at Corinth, and its special work as a charitable organization, implied in the description given of Phœbe to the Roman Christians in the sixteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. St. Paul's directions to Timothy in the third chapter of his first Epistle deal both with deacons and deaconesses, and in each case lay down qualifications specially suited for distributers of charitable relief, whose duty called upon them to visit from house to house, but say nothing about any higher work. They are indeed "to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience;" they must be sound in the faith like the Seven themselves; but the special qualifications demanded by St. Paul are those needed in almoners: "The deacons must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre."

So far as to the testimony of Scripture. When we pass beyond the bounds of the canonical books, and come to the apostolic fathers, the evidence is equally clear. They testify to the universality of the institution, and bear witness to its work of distribution. Clement of Rome was a contemporary of the Apostles. He wrote an Epistle to the Corinthians, which is the earliest witness to the existence of St. Paul's Epistles to the same Church. In Clement's epistle we find express mention of deacons, of their apostolic appointment, and of the universal diffusion of the office. In the forty-third chapter of his epistle Clement writes to the Corinthians concerning the Apostles:—"Thus preaching through countries and cities they appointed bishops and deacons for those who should afterwards believe," clearly implying that deacons then existed at Rome, though we have no express notice of them in the epistle written by St. Paul to the Roman Church.

There is a rule, however, very needful for historical investigations. Silence is no conclusive argument against an alleged fact, unless there be silence where, if the alleged fact had existed, it must have been mentioned. Josephus, for instance, is silent about Christ and Christianity. Yet he wrote when its existence was a matter of common notoriety. But there was no necessity for him to notice it. It was an awkward fact too, and so he is silent. St. Paul does not mention deacons as existing at Rome, though he does mention them at Philippi. But Clement's words expressly assert that universally, in all cities and countries, this order was established wherever the Apostles taught; and so we find it even from pagan records. Pliny's letter to Trajan, written about A.D. 110, some fifteen or twenty years later than Clement, testifies that the order of deacons existed in far distant Bithynia, among the Christians of the Dispersion to whom St. Peter directed his Epistle. Pliny's words are, "I therefore thought it the more necessary, in order to ascertain what truth there was in this account, to examine two slave-girls who were called deaconesses (*ministræ*), and even to use torture." (See the article Trajanus in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, iv., 1040.) It is exactly the same with St. Ignatius in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Trallians, which dates about the same period. The spiritual side of the office had now come more prominently into notice, as the occasion of their first appointment had fallen into disuse; but still Ignatius recognises the origin of the diaconate when he writes that "the deacons are not deacons of meats and drinks, but servants of the Church of God" (Lightfoot, *Apost. Fathers*, vol. ii., sec. i., p. 156). While again Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philippians, ch. v., recognises

the same qualities as necessary to deacons which St. Paul requires and enumerates in his Epistle to Timothy. Justin Martyr, a little later, twenty years or so, tells us that the deacons distributed the elements consecrated in the Holy Communion to the believers that were absent (Justin, *First Apol.*, ch. lxvii.). This is most important testimony, connecting the order of deacons as then flourishing at Rome and their work with the Seven constituted by the Apostle. The daily distribution of the Apostle's time was closely connected with the celebration of the Eucharist, which indeed in its meal or food, common to all the faithful, and its charitable collections and oblations, of which Justin Martyr speaks, retained still some trace of the daily distribution which prevailed in the early Church, and occasioned the choice of the Seven. The deacons in Justin Martyr's day distributed the spiritual food to the faithful, just as in earlier times they distributed all the sustenance which the faithful required, whether in their spiritual or their temporal aspect. It is evident, from this recital of the places where the deacons are incidentally referred to, that their origin was never forgotten, and that distribution of charitable relief and help was always retained as the essence, the central idea and notion, of the office of deacon, though at the same time other and larger functions were by degrees entrusted to them, as the Church grew and increased, and ecclesiastical life and wants became more involved and complex.[1] History bears out this

[1] The community of goods may have evolved itself naturally enough out of the celebration of the Eucharist. Just let us realize what must have happened, say, on the day of Pentecost and the few succeeding days. The Apostles seem to have been living a common life during the ten days of expectation. They dwelt in the house where the upper room

view. Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp, and must have known many apostolic men, men who had companied with the Apostles and knew the whole detail of primitive Church government; and Irenæus, speaking of Nicolas the proselyte of Antioch, describes him as "one of the seven who were first ordained to the diaconate by the Apostles." Now Irenæus is one of our great witnesses for the authenticity of the Four Gospels; surely then he must be an equally good witness to the origin of the order of deacons and the existence of the Acts of the Apostles which is implied in this reference. It is scarcely necessary to go farther in Church history, but the lower one goes the more clearly we shall see that the original notion of the diaconate is never forgotten. In the third century we find that there were still only seven deacons in Rome, though there were forty-six presbyters, a number which was retained down to the twelfth century in the seven cardinal deacons of that Church.[1] The touching story

was. The day after Pentecost there must have been a great deal to do, in prayer, baptism, and celebration of the Eucharist. Their converts would join with them in the eucharistic feast, from day to day celebrated after the primitive fashion at the end of a common meal. Some enthusiast may then have suggested that, as the Master might at any moment appear, they should always live and eat in common. After a time, as the numbers increased, this arrangement had to be modified, and a daily distribution was substituted for daily common meals. The community of goods may thus have been developed out of the spiritual feast of the Eucharist, which they took in common. When the daily distribution terminated by the exhaustion of the funds, the Agape or lovefeast took its place, remaining as a fragment or relic of the earlier custom. Pliny in his letter mentions the Agape, and rightly distinguishes it from the worship of the Christians which was celebrated in the early morning. "After these ceremonies they used to disperse, and assemble again to share a common meal of innocent food."

[1] In the twelfth century the number of cardinal deacons was fixed at fourteen, at which it has ever since remained.

of the martyrdom of St. Laurence, Archdeacon of Rome in the middle of the third century, shows that he was roasted over a slow fire in order to extort the vast sums he was supposed to have in charge for the purpose of relieving the sick and the poor connected with the Roman Church; proving that the original conception of the office as an executive and charitable organization was then vigorously retained; just as it is still set forth in the ordinal of the Church of England, where, after reciting how the deacon's office is to help the priest in several subordinate positions, it goes on to say, "Furthermore, it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved by the alms of the parishioners."

The only objection of any value which has been raised to this line of argument is based on a mere assumption. It has been said that the Seven were appointed for a special emergency, and to serve a temporary purpose connected with the community of goods which existed in the early Church of Jerusalem, and therefore when this arrangement ceased the office itself ceased also. But this argument is based on the assumption that the Christian idea of a community of goods wholly passed away, so that services of an order like the Seven were no longer required. This is a pure assumption. The community of goods as practised at Jerusalem was found by experience to be a mistake. The shape of the idea was changed, but the idea itself survived. The old form of community of goods passed away. The Christians retained their rights of private property, but were

taught to regard this private property as in a sense common, and liable for all the wants and needs of their poor and suffering brethren. A charitable order, or at least an order charged with the care of the poor and their relief, must inevitably have sprung up among the Jewish Christians. The relief of the poor was a necessary part of the duty of a synagogue. The Jewish domestic law enforced a poor-rate, and collected it through the organization of each synagogue, by means of three deacons attached to each. Selden, in his great work on *The Laws of the Hebrews*, bk. ii., chap. vi. (*Works*, i., 632), tells us that if "any Jew did not pay his fair contribution he was punished with stripes." As soon as the Jewish Christians began to organize themselves, the idea of almoners, with their daily and weekly distributions, after the synagogue model, was necessarily developed.[1] We have an unexceptionable piece of evidence upon this point. The satirist Lucian lived at the close of the second century. He was a bitter scoffer, who jeered at every form of religion, and at Christianity above all. He wrote an account of a certain Syrian named Peregrinus Proteus, who was an impostor trading upon the religious principles of various philosophical sects, and specially on those of the Christians. Lucian tells us that the Christians were the easiest persons to be deceived, because of their opinions. Lucian's words are interesting as showing what a second-century pagan, a clever literary man too, thought of Christianity, viewing it from the outside. For this reason we shall quote a little more than the words which immediately bear upon the subject. "It is incredible with what alacrity

[1] See Kitto's *Biblical Cyclopædia*, articles on Synagogue and Deacon, or Schaff's edition of Herzog's *Cyclopædia*, article on Synagogues.

these people (the Christians) support and defend the public cause. They spare nothing, in fact, to promote it. These poor men have persuaded themselves that they shall be immortal, and live for ever. They despise death therefore, and offer up their lives a voluntary sacrifice, being taught by their lawgiver that they are all brethren, and that, quitting our Grecian gods, they must worship their own sophist, who was crucified, and live in obedience to His laws. In compliance with them, they look with contempt on all worldly treasures, and hold everything in common—a maxim which they have adopted without any reason or foundation. If any cunning impostor, therefore, who knows how to manage matters, come amongst them, he soon grows rich by imposing on the credulity of those weak and foolish men." We can see here that the great outer world of paganism considered a community of goods as still prevailing among the Christians. Their boundless liberality, their intense devotion to the cause of their suffering brethren, proved this, and therefore, because a practical community of goods existed amongst them, an order of men was required to superintend the distribution of their liberality in the Second Century just as truly as the work of the Seven was needed in the Church of Jerusalem.

II. We thus can see that the office of deacon, as now constituted, had its origin in apostolic times, and is built upon a scriptural foundation; but here we are bound to point out a great difference between the ancient and the modern office. An office or organization may spring up in one age, and after existing for several centuries may develop into a shape utterly unlike its original. Yet it may be very hard to point out any special time when a vital change was made.

All we can say is that the first occupants of the office would never recognise their modern successors. Take the papacy as an instance. There has been at Rome a regular historical succession of bishops since the first century. The succession is known and undoubted. Yet could one of the bishops of Rome of the first three centuries,—above all, could a first-century bishop of Rome like St. Clement, by any possibility recognise himself or his office in the present Pope Leo XIII. ? Yet one would find it difficult to fix the exact moment when any vital change was made, or any unwonted claims put forward on behalf of the Roman See.[1] So was it in the case of deacons and their office. Their modern successors may trace themselves back to the seven elected in the primitive Church at Jerusalem, and yet the office is now a very different one in practice from what it was then. Perhaps the greatest difference, and the only one we can notice, was this. The diaconate is now merely the primary and lowest rank of the Christian ministry; a kind of apprenticeship, in fact, wherein the youthful minister serves for a year, and is then promoted as a matter of course; whereas in Jerusalem or Rome of old it was a lifelong office, in the exercise of which maturity of judgment, of piety, and of character were required for the due discharge of its manifold duties. It is now a temporary office, it was of old a permanent one. And the apostolical

[1] The College of Cardinals offers another illustration of this. The Cardinals were originally the parochial clergy of Rome. As Rome's ecclesiastical ambition increased, so did that of her parochial clergy, who came to imagine that, standing so close to the Pope, who was the door, they were themselves the hinges (cardines) on whom the door turned. I wonder if one of the original presbyters of Rome would be able to recognise his office in that of a modern cardinal claiming princely rank and precedence!

custom was much the best. It avoided many difficulties and solved many a problem. At present the office of the diaconate is practically in abeyance, and yet the functions which the ancient deacons discharged are not in abeyance, but are placed upon the shoulders of the other orders in the Church, already overwhelmed with manifold responsibilities, and neglecting, while serving tables, the higher aspects of their work. The Christian ministry in its purely spiritual, and specially in its prophetical or preaching aspect, is sorely suffering because an apostolic office is practically set aside. In the ancient Church it was never so. The deacons were chosen to a life-office. It was then but very seldom that a man chosen to the diaconate abandoned it for a higher function. It did not indeed demand the wholesale devotion of time and attention which the higher offices of the ministry did. Men even till a late period, both in East and West, combined secular pursuits with it. Thus let us take one celebrated instance. The ancient Church of England and of Ireland alike was Celtic in origin and constitution. It was intensely conservative, therefore, of ancient customs and usages derived from the times of persecution, when Christianity was first taught among the Gauls and Celts of the extreme West. The well-known story of the introduction of Christianity into England under St. Augustine and the opposition he met with prove this. As it was in other matters, so was it with the ancient Celtic deacons; the old customs remained; they held office for life, and joined with it at the same time other and ordinary occupations. St. Patrick, for instance, the apostle of Ireland, tells us that his father Calpurnius was a deacon, and yet he was a farmer and a decurion, or alderman, as we should say, of a Roman town near Dumbarton on the river Clyde.

This happened about the year 400 of the Christian era.[1]

Here indeed, as in so many other cases, the Church of Christ needs to go back to scriptural example and to apostolic rule. We require for the work of the Church deacons like the primitive men who devoted their whole lives to this one object; made it the subject of their thoughts, their cares, their studies, how they might instruct the ignorant, relieve the poor and widows, comfort the prisoners, sustain the martyrs in their last supreme hour; and who thus using well the office of a deacon found in it a sufficient scope for their efforts and a sufficient reward for their exertions, because they thereby purchased for themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith of Jesus Christ. The Church now requires the help of living agencies in vast numbers, and they are not forthcoming. Let her avail herself of apostolic resources, and fall back upon primitive precedents. The real diaconate should be revived. Godly and spiritual men should be called upon to do their duty. Deacons should be ordained without being called to give up their ordinary employments. Work which now unduly accumulates upon overburdened shoulders should be assigned to others suitably to their talents, and thus a twofold blessing would be secured. Christian life would flourish more abundantly, and many a rent and schism, the simple result of energies repressed and unemployed, would be destroyed in their very commencement.

We have devoted much of our space to this subject, because it is one of great interest, as touching the origin

[1] I have expanded this subject in *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, ch. ii., viii., ix.; and in *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, pp. 352-70.

and authority of the Christian ministry, and also because it has been a subject much debated; but we must hurry on to other points connected with the first appointment to the diaconate. The people selected the person to be ordained to this work. It is probable that they made their choice out of the different classes composing the Christian community. The mode of election of the Seven, and the qualifications laid down by the Apostles, were derived from the synagogue. Thus we read in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*, art. "Synagogue:"—"The greatest care was taken by the rulers of the synagogue and of the congregation that those elected almoners should be men of modesty, wisdom, justice, and have the confidence of the people. They had to be elected by the harmonious voice of the people." Seven deacons altogether were chosen. Three were probably Hebrew Christians, three Grecian Christians or Hellenists, and one a representative of the proselytes, Nicolas of Antioch. This would have been but natural. The Apostles wanted to get rid of murmurs, jealousies, and divisions in the Church, and in no way could this have been more effectually done than by the principle of representation. Had the Seven been all selected from one class alone, divisions and jealousies would have prevailed as of old. The Apostles themselves had proved this. They were all Hebrew Christians. Their position and authority might have secured them from blame. Yet murmurings had arisen against them as distributers, and so they devised another plan, which, to have been successful, as it doubtless was, must have proceeded on a different principle. Then when the seven wise and prudent men were chosen from the various classes, the Apostles asserted their supreme position: "When the Apostles had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

And as the result peace descended like a shower upon the Church, and spiritual prosperity followed upon internal peace and union.

III. "They laid their hands on them." This statement sets forth the external expression and the visible channel of the ordination to their office which the Apostles conferred. This action of the imposition of hands was of frequent use among the ancient Jews. The Apostles, as well acquainted with Old Testament history, must have remembered that it was employed in the case of designation of Joshua as the leader of Israel in the place of Moses (Num. xxvii. 18-23; compare Deut. xxxiv. 9), that it was used even in the synagogue in the appointment of Jewish rabbis, and had been sanctioned by the practice of Jesus Christ. The Apostles naturally, therefore, used this symbol upon the solemn appointment of the first deacons, and the same ceremonial was repeated upon similar occasions. Paul and Barnabas were set apart at Antioch for their missionary work by the imposition of hands. St. Paul uses the strongest language about the ceremony. He does not hesitate to attribute to it a certain sacramental force and efficacy, bidding Timothy "stir up the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim. i. 6); while again when we come down a few years later we find the "laying on of hands" reckoned as one of the fundamental elements of religion, in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But it was not merely in the solemn appointment of officials in the Church that this ceremony found place. It was employed by the Apostles as the rite which filled up and perfected the baptism which had been administered by others. Philip baptized the Samaritans. Peter and John laid their hands on them and they received the

Holy Ghost. The ceremony of imposition of hands was so essential and distinguishing a point that Simon Magus selects it as the one he desires above all others effectually to purchase, so that the outward symbol might be followed by the inward grace. "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost," was the prayer of the arch-heretic to St. Peter; while again in the nineteenth chapter we find St. Paul using the same visible ceremony in the case of St. John's disciples, who were first baptized with Christian baptism, and then endued by St. Paul with the gift of the Spirit. Imposition of hands in the case of ordination is a natural symbol, indicative of the transmission of function and authority. It fitly indicates and notifies to the whole Church the persons who have been ordained, and therefore has ever been regarded as a necessary part of ordination. St. Jerome, who was a very keen critic as well as a close student of the Divine oracles, fixes upon this public and solemn designation as a sufficient explanation and justification of the imposition of hands in ordinations, lest any one should be ordained without his knowledge by a silent and solitary prayer. Hence every branch of the Church of Christ has rigorously insisted upon imposition of hands after the apostolic example, in the case of ordinations to official positions, with one or two apparent and very doubtful exceptions, which merely prove the binding character of the rule.

IV. The list of names again is full of profit and of warning. How completely different from human histories, for instance, is this Divine record of the first doings of the Church! How thoroughly shaped after the Divine model is this catalogue of the earliest officials chosen by the Apostles! Men have speculated whether

they were Hebrews or Grecians, whether they belonged to the seventy sent forth by Christ or to the hundred and twenty who first gathered into the upper room at Jerusalem. All such speculations are curious and interesting, but they have nothing to do with man's salvation; therefore they are sternly put on one side and out of sight. How we should long to know the subsequent history of these men, and to trace their careers! yet Holy Writ tells us but very little about them, nothing certain, in fact, save what we learn about St. Stephen and St. Philip. God bestowed Holy Scripture upon men, not to satisfy or minister to their curiosity, but to nourish their souls and edify their spirits. And surely no lesson is more needed than the one implied in the silences of this passage; there is in truth none more necessary for our publicity-seeking and popularity-hunting age than this, that God's holiest servants have laboured in obscurity, have done their best work in secret, and have looked to God alone and to His judgment for their reward. I have said indeed that concerning the list of names recorded as those of the first deacons, we know nothing but of St. Stephen and St. Philip, whose careers will again come under our notice in later chapters. There is, however, a current tradition that Nicolas, the proselyte of Antioch, did distinguish himself, but in an unhappy direction. It is asserted by Irenæus in his work *Against Heresies* (Book I., ch. 26), that Nicolas was the founder of the sect of Nicolaitans denounced in the Revelation of St. John (ch. ii., 6, 16). Critics are, however, much divided upon this point. Some clear Nicolas of this charge, while others uphold it. It is indeed impossible to determine this matter. But supposing that Nicolas of Antioch was

the author of this heresy, which was of an antinomian character, like so many of the earliest heresies that distracted the primitive Church, this circumstance would teach us an instructive lesson. Just as there was a Judas Iscariot among the Apostles, and a Demas among St. Paul's most intimate disciples, so was there a Nicolas among the first deacons. No place is so holy, no office so sacred, no privileges so great, but that the tempter can make his way there. He can lurk unseen and unsuspected amid the pillars of the temple, and he can find us out, as he did the Son of God Himself, amid the wilds of the desert. Official position and exalted privileges confer no immunity from temptation. Nay, rather, they bring with them additional temptations over and above those which assail the ordinary Christian, and should therefore lead everyone called to any similar work to diligent watchfulness, to earnest prayer, lest while teaching others they themselves fall into condemnation. There is, however, another lesson which a different version of the history of Nicolas would teach. Clement of Alexandria, in his celebrated work called the *Stromata* (Book II., chap. 20, and Book III., chap. 4), tells us that Nicolas was a most strictly virtuous man. He was extreme even in his asceticism, and, like many ascetics, used language that might be easily abused to the purposes of wickedness. He was wont to say that the "flesh must be abused," meaning that it must be chastised and restrained. One-sided and extreme teaching is easily perverted by the wicked nature of man, and men of impure lives, listening to the language of Nicolas, interpreted his words as an excuse for abusing the flesh by plunging into the depths of immorality and crime. Men placed in official positions and called to the exercise of the

clerical office should weigh their words. Extreme statements are bad unless duly and strictly guarded. The intention of the speaker may be good, and a man's own life thoroughly consistent, but unbalanced teaching will fall upon ground where the life and intention of the teacher will have no power or influence, and bring forth evil fruit, as in the case of the Nicolaitans.

V. The central figure of this whole section of our narrative is St. Stephen. He is introduced into the narrative with the same startling suddenness which we may note in the case of Barnabas and of Elijah. He runs a rapid course, flings all, Apostles and every one else, into the shade for a time, and then disappears, exemplifying those fruitful sayings of inspiration, so true in our every-day experience of God's dealings, "The first shall be last, and the last first." "Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but it is God alone that giveth the increase." Stephen, full of grace and power, did great signs and wonders among the people. These two words, grace and power, are closely connected. Their union in this passage is significant. It was not the intellect, or the eloquence, or the activity of St. Stephen which made him powerful among the people and crowned his labours with such success. It was his abundant grace. Eloquence and learning, active days and laborious nights, are good and necessary things. God uses them and demands them from His people. He chooses to use human agencies, and therefore demands that the human agents shall give Him of their best, and not offer to Him the blind and lame of their flock. But these things will be utterly useless and ineffective apart from Christ and the power of His grace. The Church of Christ is a supernatural society,

and the work of Christ is a supernatural work, and in that work the grace of Christ is absolutely necessary to make any human gift or exertion effectual in carrying out His purposes of love and mercy. This is an age of organizations and committees and boards; and some good men are so wrapped up in them that they have no time to think of anything else. To this busy age these words, "Stephen, full of grace and power," convey a useful warning, teaching that the best organizations and schemes will be useless to produce Stephen's power unless Stephen's grace be found there as well. This passage is a prophecy and picture of the future in another aspect. The fulness of grace in Stephen wrought powerfully amongst the people. It was the savour of life unto life in some. But in others it was a savour of death unto death, and provoked them to evil deeds, for they suborned men "which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God."

We get in these words, in this false accusation, even through its falsehood, a glimpse into the character of St. Stephen's preaching. A false accusation need not be necessarily altogether false. Perhaps rather we should say that, in order to be effective for mischief, a twisted, distorted charge, with some basis of truth, some semblance of justification about it, is the best for the accuser's purpose, and the most difficult for the defendant to answer. St. Stephen was ripening for heaven more rapidly than the Apostles themselves. He was learning more rapidly than St. Peter himself the true spiritual meaning of the Christian scheme. He had taught, in no ambiguous language, the universal character of the Gospel and the catholic mission of the Church. He had expanded and applied the

magnificent declarations of the Master Himself, "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father;" "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." And then the narrow-minded Grecian Jews, anxious to vindicate their orthodoxy, which was doubted by their Hebrew brethren, distorted Stephen's wider and grander conceptions into a charge of blasphemy against the holy man. What a picture of the future of Christ's best and truest witnesses, especially when insisting on some nobler and wider or forgotten aspect of truth. Their teaching has been ever suspected, distorted, accused as blasphemous; and so it must ever be. And yet God's servants, when they find themselves thus misrepresented, can realize to themselves that they are but following the course which the saints of every age have run, that they are being made like unto the image of Stephen the first martyr, and of Jesus Christ Himself, the King of Saints, who suffered under a similar accusation. The mere popularity-hunter will, of course, carefully eschew such charges and suspicions. His object is human praise and reward, and he shapes his teaching so as to carefully avoid giving offence. But then the mere popularity-hunter seeks his reward here below, and very often gets it. Stephen, however, and every true teacher looks not for reward in this world. Stephen taught truth as God revealed it to his soul. He suffered the consequence, and then received his crown from that Almighty Judge before whose awful tribunal he ever consciously stood. Misrepresentation must ever be expected by God's true servants. It must be discounted, borne with patiently, taken as a trial of faith and patience, and then, in God's own time, it will

turn out to our greater blessing. One consideration alone ought to prove sufficient to console us under such circumstances. If our teaching was not proving injurious to his cause, the Evil One would not trouble himself about it. Let us only take good heed lest our own self-love and vanity should lead us to annoy ourselves too much about the slander or the evil report, remembering that misrepresentation and slander is ever the portion of God's servants. Jesus Christ and Stephen were thus treated. St. Paul's teaching was accused of tending to licentiousness; the earliest Christians were accused of vilest practices; St. Athanasius in his struggles for truth was accused of rebellion and murder; the Reformers were accused of lawlessness; John Wesley of Romanism and disloyalty; William Wilberforce of being an enemy to British trade; John Howard of being an encourager of crime and immorality. Let us be content then if our lot be with the saints, and our portion be that of the servants of the Most High.

Again, we learn from this place how religious zeal can overthrow religion and work out the purposes of evil. Religious zeal, mere party spirit taking the place of real religion, led the Hellenists to suborn men and falsely accuse St. Stephen. They made an idol of the system of Judaism, and forgot its spirit. They worshipped their idol so much that they were ready to break the commandments of God for its sake. The dangers of party spirit in matters of religion, and the evil deeds which have been done in apparent zeal for God and real zeal for the devil, these are still the lessons, true for the future ages of the Church, which we read in this passage. And how true to life has even our own age found this prophetic picture. Men cannot indeed now

suborn men and bring fatal charges against them in matters of religion, and yet they can fall into exactly the same crime. Party religion and party zeal lead men into precisely the same courses as they did in the days of St. Stephen. Partisanship causes them to violate all the laws of honour, of honesty, of Christian charity, imagining that they are thereby advancing the cause of Christ, forgetting that they are acting on the rule which the Scriptures repudiate,—they are doing evil that good may come,—and striving to further Christ's kingdom by a violation of His fundamental precepts. Oh for more of the spirit of true charity, which will lead men to support their own views in a spirit of Christian love! Oh for more of that true grasp of Christianity which will teach that a breach of Christian charity is far worse than any amount of speculative error! The error as we think it may be in reality God's own truth; but the violation of God's law implied in such conduct as Stephen's adversaries displayed, and as party zeal now often prompts, can never be otherwise than contrary to the mind and law of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XV.

ST. STEPHEN'S DEFENCE AND THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

"[The Grecian Jews] stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us."—ACTS vi. 12-14.

"And the high priest said, Are these things so? And he said, Brethren and fathers, hearken."—ACTS vii. 1, 2.

ST. STEPHEN and St. Philip are the two prominent names among the primitive deacons. Stephen, however, much surpasses Philip. Devout expositors of Scripture have recognised in his name a prophecy of his greatness. Stephen is Stephanos, a garland or crown, in the Greek language. Garlands or crowns were given by the ancient Greeks to those who rendered good services to their cities, or brought fame to them by winning triumphs in the great national games. And Stephen had his name divinely chosen for him by that Divine Providence which ordereth all things, because he was to win in the fulness of time an imperishable garland, and to gain a crown of righteousness, and to render highest services to the Church of God by his teaching and by his testimony even unto death. St. Stephen had a Greek name, and must have belonged

to the Hellenistic division of the Jewish nation. He evidently directed his special energies to their conversion, for while the previous persecutions had been raised by the Sadducees, as the persons whose prejudices had been assailed, the attack on Stephen was made by the Grecian Jews of the synagogues belonging to the Libertines or freedmen, in union with those from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia. The Libertines had been slaves, Jewish captives, taken in the various wars waged by the Romans. They had been dispersed among the Romans at Rome and elsewhere. There in their captivity they had learned the Greek language and become acquainted with Greek culture; and now, when they had recovered their freedom through that suppleness and power of adaptation which the Jewish race has ever displayed, they returned to Jerusalem in such numbers that a synagogue of the Libertines was formed. Their captivity and servitude had, however, only intensified their religious feelings, and made them more jealous of any attempts to extend to the Gentiles who had held them captives the spiritual possessions they alone enjoyed. There is, indeed, an extremely interesting parallel to the case of the Libertines in early English history, as told by Bede. The Saxons came to England in the fifth century and conquered the Christian Celts, whom they drove into Wales. The Celts, however, avenged themselves upon their conquerors, for they refused to impart to the pagan Saxons the glad tidings of salvation which the Celts possessed.[1] But the Libertines were not the only assailants of St. Stephen. With them were joined members of synagogues connected with various other important Jewish centres.

[1] See Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book ii., chap. 2.

Jerusalem was then somewhat like Rome at the present time. It was the one city whither a race scattered all over the world and speaking every language tended. Each language was represented by a synagogue, just as there are English Colleges and Irish Colleges and Spanish Colleges at Rome, where Roman Catholics of those nationalities find themselves specially at home. Among these Hellenistic antagonists of St. Stephen we have mention made of the men of Cilicia. Here, doubtless, was found a certain Saul of Tarsus, enthusiastic in defence of the ancient faith, and urgent with all his might to bring to trial the apostate who had dared to speak words which he considered derogatory of the city and temple of the great king.

Saul, indeed, may have been the great agent in Stephen's arrest. It is a nature and an intellect like his that can discern the logical results of teaching like St. Stephen's, and then found an accusation upon the deductions he makes rather than upon the actual words spoken. Saul may have placed the Church under another obligation on this occasion. To him may be due the report of the speech made by Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Indeed, it is to St. Paul in his unconverted state we feel inclined to attribute the knowledge which St. Luke possessed of the earlier proceedings of the council in the matter of the Christians.[1] After St.

[1] I have already said something on p. 181 of the meetings of the council, but not perhaps quite enough to explain St. Paul's relation to St Luke as far as the Acts of the Apostles is concerned. The Sanhedrin sat in a semicircle. In the centre of the arc the president was placed; at either extremity there sat a scribe, while the disciples or pupils of the Sanhedrists were arranged in three rows appropriate to their respective attainments. In Selden's *Works*, i., 1323, in his treatise on the *Assemblies of the Hebrews*, the reader can see a plan of the Sanhedrin when sitting. St. Paul, as a favourite pupil of the President

Paul's conversion we get no such details concerning the deliberations of the Sanhedrin as we do in the earlier chapters of the Acts, simply because Saul of Tarsus, the rising champion and hope of the Pharisees, was present at the earlier meetings and had access to their inmost secrets, while at the later meetings he never appeared save to stand his trial as an accused person. The question, How was Stephen's speech preserved? has been asked by some critics who wished to decry the historic truth of this narrative, and to represent the whole thing as a fancy sketch or romance, worked up on historic lines indeed, but still only a romance, written many years after the events had happened. Critics who ask this forget what modern research has shown in another department. The *Acts* of the martyrs are sometimes very large documents, containing reports of charges, examinations, and speeches of considerable length. These have often been considered mere fancy history, the work of mediæval monks wishing to celebrate the glory of these early witnesses for truth, and sceptical writers have often put them aside without bestowing even a passing notice upon them.

Modern investigation has taken these documents, critically investigated them, compared them with the Roman criminal law, and has come to the conclusion

Gamaliel, would have the best place among the disciples, if he were not actually one of the council. Selden says that the disciples were arrayed in this prominent position not only that they might be instructed in law, but also might be available for serving on the council if any member died suddenly or was taken ill. St. Paul probably made numerous notes of the speeches delivered before him, and could supply St. Luke with notices written and verbal. The article in Schaff's *Theological Cyclopædia* on Sanhedrin should be consulted for more information and references on this point, as well as the other references on p. 181.

that they are genuine, affording some of the most interesting and important examples of ancient methods of legal procedure anywhere to be found. How did the Christians get these records? it may be asked. Various hints, given here and there, enable us to see. Bribery of the officials was sometimes used. The notaries, shorthand writers, and clerks attendant upon a Roman court were numerous, and were always accessible to the gifts of the richer Christians when they wished to obtain a correct narrative of a martyr's last trial. Secret Christians among the officials also effected something, and there were numerous other methods by which the Roman judicial records became the property of the Church, to be in time transmitted to the present age.[1] Now just the same may have been

[1] M. Le Blant is one of the greatest living authorities on ancient art and history. He has been head of the French Archæological School at Rome. He has published an extremely able work on the subject of the *Acts* of the martyrs, in which he treats them in a strictly scientific manner. He confronts them with the processes of Roman law, the facts of chronology and history, and triumphantly shows the vast amount of truth contained in these documents. He also explains how the Christians got possession of the Roman magistrates' notes, which they then inserted in the local Church records, and dispersed amid other Churches, after the manner of the Epistle of the Lyonnese Church, to which reference has been already made. Le Blant, on p. 9 of his memoir, quotes one ancient document, which incidentally mentions that "inasmuch as it was necessary to collect all the records of the martyrs' confessions, the Christians paid one of the javelin men two hundred denarii for the privilege of transcribing them." We are apt to forget that both Jews and Romans conducted all their persecutions under strict judicial forms. We sometimes think that the persecutions were mere outbursts of popular rage, managed after the manner of a street riot. The examples of the magistrates at Corinth and Ephesus in the Acts of the Apostles ought to dispel this illusion. The Romans had a perfect horror of civil commotions, and sternly repressed them. If a sect was to be put down, it should be put down in a legal manner, with questions and answers and due records of the proceedings.

the case with the trials of the primitive Christians, and specially of St. Stephen. But we know that St. Paul was there. Memory among the Jews was sharpened to an extraordinary degree. We have now no idea to what an extent the human memory was then developed. The immense volumes which are filled with the Jewish commentaries on Scripture were in those times transmitted from generation to generation simply by means of this power. It was considered, indeed, a great innovation when those commentaries were committed to writing instead of being intrusted to tradition. It is no wonder then that St. Paul could afford his disciple, St. Luke, a report of what Stephen said on this occasion, even if he had not preserved any notes whatsoever of the process of the trial. Let us, however, turn to the consideration of St. Stephen's speech, omitting any further notice of objections based on our own ignorance of the practices and methods of distant ages.

I. The defence of St. Stephen was a speech delivered by a Jew, and addressed to a Jewish audience. This is our first remark, and it is an important one. We are apt to judge the Scriptures, their speeches, arguments, and discussions, by a Western standard, forgetting that Orientals argued then and argue still not according to the rules of logic taught by Aristotle, nor by the methods of eloquence derived from the traditions of Cicero and Quinctilian, but by methods and rules essentially different. What would satisfy Westerns would have seemed to them utterly worthless, just as an argument which now seems pointless and weak appeared to them absolutely conclusive. Parallels, analogies, parables, mystical interpretations were then favourite methods of argument, and if we wish to under-

stand writers like the authors of the scriptural books we must strive to place ourselves at their point of view, or else we shall miss their true interpretation. Let us apply this idea to St. Stephen's defence, which has been often depreciated because treated as if it were an oration addressed to a Western court or audience. Erasmus, for instance, was an exceedingly learned man, who lived at the period of the Reformation. He was well skilled in Latin and Greek learning, but knew nothing of Jewish ideas. He hesitates not, therefore, to say in his Annotations on this passage that there are many things in Stephen's speech which have no bearing on the question at issue; while Michaelis, another German writer of great repute in the earlier days of this century, remarks that there are many things in this oration of which we cannot perceive the tendency, as regards the accusation brought against the martyr. Let us examine and see if the case be not otherwise, remembering that promise of the Master, given not to supersede human exertion or to indulge human laziness, but given to support and sustain and safeguard His persecuted servants under circumstances like those amid which Stephen found himself. "But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." What, then, was the charge brought against Stephen? He was accused of "speaking blasphemous words against Moses, and against God," or, to put it in the formal language used by the witnesses, "We have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us." Now Stephen, if merely a man of common sense, must

have intended to reply to this indictment. Some critics, as we have just noted, think that he failed effectually to do so. We are indeed often in great danger of paying too much attention and lending too great weight to objections of this kind urged by persons who assume to themselves the office of critics; and to counteract this tendency perhaps it is as well to note that a leading German writer of a rationalistic type, named Zeller, who has written a work to decry the historical character of the Acts, finds in St. Stephen's words an oration "not only characteristic, but also better suited to the case and to the accusation raised against him than is usually supposed."

Disregarding, then, all cavils of critics whose views are mutually destructive, let us see if we cannot discern in this narrative the marks of a sound and powerful mind, guided, aided, and directed by the Spirit of God which dwelt so abundantly in him. St. Stephen was accused of irreverence towards Moses, and hostility towards the temple, and towards all the Jewish institutions. How did he meet this? He begins his address to the Sanhedrin at the earliest period of their national history, and shows how the chosen people had passed through many changes and developments without interfering with their essential identity amid these changes. His opponents now made idols of their local institutions and of the buildings of the temple, but God's choice and God's promise had originally nothing local about them at all. Abraham their great father was first called by God in Ur of the Chaldees, far away across the desert in distant Mesopotamia. Thence he removed to Charran, and then, only after the lapse of years, became a wanderer up and down in Canaan, where he never possessed so much of the land as he could set

his foot upon. The promises of God and the covenant of grace were personal things, made to God's chosen children, not connected with lands or buildings or national customs. He next takes up the case of Moses. He had been accused of blasphemy and irreverence towards the great national law-giver. His words prove that he entertained no such feelings; he respected and revered Moses just as much as his opponents and accusers did. But Moses had nothing to say or do with Canaan, or Jerusalem, or the temple. Nay, rather, his work for the chosen people was done in Egypt and in Midian and on the side of Horeb, where the presence and name of Jehovah were manifested not in the temple or tabernacle, but in the bush burning yet not consumed.

The Grecian Jews accused Stephen of irreverence towards Moses. But how had their forefathers treated that Moses whom he recognised as a divinely-sent messenger? "They thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." Moses, however, led them onward and upward. His motto was hope. His rod and his voice ever pointed forward. He warned them that his own ministry was not the final one; that it was only an intermediate and temporary institution, till the prophet should come unto whom the people should hearken. There was a chosen people before the customs introduced by Moses. There may therefore be a chosen people still when these customs cease, having fulfilled their purpose. The argument of St. Stephen in this passage is the same as that of St. Paul in the fourth chapter of Galatians, where he sets forth the temporary and intermediate character of the Levitical law and of the covenant of circumcision. So teaches St. Stephen in his speech.

His argument is simply this:—I have been accused of speaking blasphemous words against Moses because I proclaimed that a greater Prophet than he had come, and yet this was only what Moses himself had foretold. It is not I who have blasphemed and opposed Moses: it is my accusers rather. But then he remembers that the accusation dealt not merely with Moses. It went farther, and accused him of speaking blasphemous words against the national sanctuary, "saying that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place." This leads him to speak of the temple. His argument now takes a different turn, and runs thus. This building is now the centre of Jewish thoughts and affections. But it is a mere modern thing as compared with the original choice and promise of God. There was no chosen dwelling-place of the Almighty in the earliest days of all; His presence was then manifested wherever His chosen servants dwelt. Then Moses made a tent or tabernacle, which abode in no certain spot, but moved hither and thither. Last of all, long after Abraham, and long after Moses, and even after David, Solomon built God an house. Even when it was built, and in all its original glory, even then the temporary character of the temple was clearly recognised by the prophet Isaiah, who had long ago, in his sixty-sixth chapter, proclaimed the truth which had been brought forward as an accusation against himself: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool; what house will ye build Me, saith the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?"—a great spiritual truth which had been anticipated long before Isaiah by King Solomon, in his famous dedication prayer at the opening of the temple: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens

cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded" (1 Kings viii. 27). After St. Stephen had set forth this undeniable truth confirmed by the words of Isaiah, which to the Pharisaic portion of his audience, at least, must have seemed conclusive, there occurs a break in the address.

One would have thought that he would then have proceeded to describe the broader and more spiritual life which had shone forth for mankind in Christ, and to expound the freedom from all local restrictions which should henceforth belong to acceptable worship of the Most High. Most certainly, if the speech had been invented for him and placed in his mouth, a forger would naturally have designed a fuller and more balanced discourse, setting forth the doctrine of Christ as well as the past history of the Jews. We cannot tell whether he actually entered more fully into the subject or not. Possibly the Sadducean portion of his audience had got quite enough. Their countenances and gestures bespoke their horror of St. Stephen's doctrine. Isaiah's opinion carried no weight with them as contrasted with the institutions of Moses, which were their pride and glory; and so, borne along by the force of his oratory, St. Stephen finished with that vigorous denunciation which led to his death: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." This exposition of St. Stephen's speech will show the drift and argument of it as it appears to us. But it must have seemed to them much more powerful, plain-spoken, and aggressive. He vindicated himself to any right-thinking and fair mind from the accusation of irreverence towards God, towards Moses, or towards the Divine institutions. But the minds

of his hearers were not fair. He had trampled upon their prejudices, he had suggested the vanity of their dearest ideas, and they could not estimate his reasons or follow his arguments, but they could resort to the remedy which every failing though for the present popular cause possesses,—they could destroy him. And thus they treated the modern as their ancestors had treated the ancient prophets. What a lesson Stephen's speech has for the Church of every age! How wide and manifold the applications of it! The Jewish error is one that is often committed, their mistake often repeated. The Jews identified God's honour and glory with an old order that was fast passing away, and had no eyes to behold a new and more glorious order that was opening upon them. We may blame them then for their murder of St. Stephen, but we must blame them gently, feeling that they acted as human nature has ever acted under similar circumstances, and that good motives were mingled with those feelings of rage and bigotry and narrowness that urged them to their deed of blood. Let us see how this was. Stephen proclaimed a new order and a new development, embracing for his hearers a vast political as well as a vast religious change. His forecast of the future swept away at once all the privileges and profits connected with the religious position of Jerusalem, and thus destroyed the political prospects of the Jewish people. It is no wonder the Sanhedrin could not appreciate his oration. Men do not ever listen patiently when their pockets are being touched, their profits swept away, their dearest hopes utterly annihilated. Has not human experience often repeated the scene acted out that day in Jerusalem? On the political stage men have often seen it,—we ourselves

have seen it. The advocates of liberty, civil and religious, have had to struggle against the same spirit and the same prejudices as St. Stephen. Take the political world alone. We now look back and view with horror the deeds wrought in the name of authority and in opposition to the principles of change and innovation. We read the stories of Alva and the massacres in the Netherlands, the bloody deeds of the seventeenth century in England and all over Europe, the miseries and the bloodshed of the American war of independence, the fierce opposition with which the spirit of liberty has been resisted throughout this century; and our sympathies are altogether ranged on the side of the sufferers,—the losers and defeated, it may have been, for the time, but the triumphant in the long run.

The true student, however, of history or of human nature will not content himself with any one-sided view, and he will have some sympathy to spare for those who adopted the stern measures. He will not judge them too harshly. They reverenced the past as the Jews of Jerusalem did, and reverence is a feeling that is right and blessed. It is no good sign for this age of ours that it possesses so little reverence for the past, thinks so lightly of the institutions, the wisdom, the ideas of antiquity, and is ready to change them at a moment's notice. The men who now are held up to the execration of posterity, the high priest and the Sanhedrin who murdered Stephen, the tyrants and despots and their agents who strove to crush the supporters of liberty, the writers who cried them down and applauded or urged on the violent measures which were adopted and sometimes triumphed for the time,—we should strive to put ourselves in their position, and see what they had to say for themselves, and thus seek

to judge them here below as the Eternal King will judge them at the great final tribunal. They knew the good which the old political institutions had worked. They had lived and flourished under them as their ancestors had lived and flourished before them. The future they knew not. All they knew was that changes were proposed which threatened everything with which their dearest memories were bound up, and the innovators seemed dangerous creatures, obnoxious to God and man, and they dealt with them accordingly.

So it has been and still is in politics. The opponents of political change are sometimes denounced in the fiercest language, as if they were morally wicked. The late Dr. Arnold seems a grievous offender in this respect. No one can read his charming biography by Dean Stanley without recognising how intolerant he was towards his political opponents; how blind he was to those good motives which inspire the timorous, the ignorant, and the aged, when brought face to face with changes which appear to them thickly charged with the most dangerous results. Charity towards opponents is sadly needed in the political as well as in the religious world. And as it has been in politics so has it been in religion. Men reverence the past, and that reverence easily glides into an idolatry blind to its defects and hostile to any improvement. It is in religion too as in politics; a thousand other interests—money, office, expectations, memories of the loved and lost—are bound up with old religious forms, and then when the prophet arises with his Divine message, as Stephen arose before the Sanhedrin, the ancient proverb is fulfilled, the corruption of the best becomes the worst, the good motives mingle with the evil, and are used by the poor human heart to justify the harshest, most unchristian

deeds done in defence of what men believe to be the cause of truth and righteousness. Let us be just and fair to the aggressors as well as to the aggrieved, to the persecutors as well as to the persecuted. But let us all the same take good heed to learn for ourselves the lessons this narrative presents. Reverence is a good thing, and a blessed thing; and without reverence no true progress, either in political or spiritual things, can be made. But reverence easily degenerates into blind superstitious idolatry. It was so with the Sanhedrin, it was so at the Reformation, it has ever been so with the opponents of true religious progress. Let us evermore strive to keep minds free, open, unbiassed, respecting the past, yet ready to listen to the voice and fresh revelations of God's will and purposes made to us by the messengers whom He chooses as He pleases. Perhaps there was never an age which needed this lesson of Stephen's speech and its reception more than our own. The attitude of religious men towards science and its numerous and wondrous advances needs guidance such as this incident affords. The Sanhedrin had their own theory and interpretation of God's dealings in the past. They clung to it passionately, and refused the teaching of Stephen, who would have widened their views, and shown than that a grand and noble development was quite in accordance with all the facts of the case, and indeed a necessary result of the sacred history when truly expounded. What a parable and picture of the future we here find! What a warning as to the attitude religious men should take up with respect to the progress of science! Patience, intellectual and religious patience, is taught us. The Sanhedrin were impatient of St. Stephen's views, which they could

not understand, and their impatience made them lose a blessing and commit a sin. Now has it not been at times much the same with ourselves? Fifty or sixty years ago men were frightened at the revelations of geology,—they had their own interpretations of the past and of the Scriptures,—just as three centuries ago men were frightened at the revelations and teaching of modern astronomy. Prejudiced and narrow men then strove to hound down the teachers of the new science, and would if they could have destroyed them in the name of God. Patience here, however, has done its work and has had its reward. The new revelations have been taken up and absorbed by the Church of Christ. Men have learned to distinguish between their own interpretations of religion and of religious documents on the one hand and the religion itself on the other. The old, human, narrow, prejudiced interpretations have been modified. That which could be shaken and was untrue has passed away, while that which cannot be shaken has remained.

The lesson taught us by these instances of astronomy and geology ought not to be thrown away. Patience is again necessary for the Christian and for the scientist alike. New facts are every day coming to light, but it requires much time and thought to bring new facts and old truths into their due correlation, to look round and about them. The human mind is at best very small and weak. It is blind, and cannot see afar off, and it is only by degrees it can grasp truth in its fulness. A new fact, for instance, discovered by science may appear at first plainly contradictory to some old truth revealed in Scripture. But even so, we should not lose our patience or our hope taught us by this chapter. What new fact of science can possibly seem more

contradictory to any old truth of the Creeds than St. Stephen's teaching about the universal character of God's promise and the freeness of acceptable worship must have seemed when compared with the Divine choice of the temple at Jerusalem? They appeared to the Sanhedrin ideas mutually destructive, though now we see them to have been quite consistent one with another. Let this historic retrospect support us when our faith is tried. Let us welcome every new fact and new revelation brought by science, and then, if they seem opposed to something we know to be true in religion, let us wait in confidence begotten of past experience that God in His own good time will clear up for His faithful people that which now seems difficult of comprehension. Patience and confidence, then, are two lessons much needed in this age, which St. Stephen's speech and its reception bring home to our hearts.

II. We have now spoken of the general aspect of the discourse, and the broad counsels we may gather from it. There are some other points, however, points of detail as distinguished from wider views, upon which we would fix our attention. They too will be found full of guidance and full of instruction. Let us take them in the order in which they appear in St. Stephen's address. The mistakes and variations which undoubtedly occur in it are well worthy of careful attention, and have much teaching necessary for these times. There are three points in which Stephen varies from the language of the Old Testament. In the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter Stephen speaks thus: "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls;" while, if we turn to the Pentateuch, we shall

find that the number of the original Hebrew immigrants is placed three times over at seventy, or threescore and ten, that is in Gen. xlvi. 27, Exod. i. 5, and Deut. x. 22. This, however, is only a comparatively minor point. The Septuagint or Greek version of the Pentateuch reads seventy-five in the first of these passages, making the sons of Joseph born in Egypt to have been nine persons, and thus completing the number seventy-five, at which it fixes the roll of the males who came with Jacob. The next two verses, the fifteenth and sixteenth, contain a much more serious mistake. They run thus:—"So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem." Now here there occur several grave errors. Jacob was not carried over and buried at Sychem at all, but at the cave of Machpelah, as is plainly stated in Gen. l. 13. Again, a plot of ground at Sychem was certainly bought, not by Abraham, however, but by Jacob. Abraham bought the field and cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite. Jacob bought his plot at Sychem from the sons of Emmor. There are in these verses, then, two serious historical mistakes; first as to the true burial-place of Jacob, and then as to the purchaser of the plot of ground at Sychem. Yet, again, there is a third mistake in the forty-third verse, where, when quoting a denunciation of Jewish idolatry from Amos v. 25, 26, he quotes the prophet as threatening, "I will carry you away beyond Babylon," whereas the prophet did say, "Therefore I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus." St. Stephen substituted Babylon for Damascus, two cities between which several hundred

miles intervened. I have stated the difficulty thus as strongly as possible, because I think that, instead of constituting a difficulty, they are a real source of living help and comfort, as well as a great practical confirmation of the story. Let us take this last point first. I say that these mistakes, admitted mistakes which I make no vain attempt to explain away, constitute a confirmation of the story as given in the Acts against modern rationalistic opponents. It is a favourite theme of many of these writers that the Acts of the Apostles is a mere piece of fancy history, a historical romance composed in the second century for the purpose of reconciling the adherents of St. Paul, or the Gentile Christians, with the followers of St. Peter, or the Jewish Christians. The persons who uphold this view fix the date of the Acts in the earlier half of the second century, and teach that the speeches and addresses were composed by the author of the book and put into the mouths of the reputed speakers. Now, in the mistake made by St. Stephen, we have a refutation of this theory. Surely any man composing a speech to put into the mouth of one of his favourite heroes and champions would not have represented him as making such grave errors when addressing the supreme Jewish senate. A man might easily make any of these slips which I have noticed in the heat of an oration, and they might have even passed unnoticed, as every speaker who has much practice in addressing the public still makes precisely the same kind of mistake. But a romancer, sitting down to forge speeches suitable to the time and place, would never have put in the mouth of his lay figures grave errors about the most elementary facts of Jewish history. We conclude, then, that the inaccuracies reported as made by St. Stephen are evidences of the genuine

character of the oration attributed to him. Then again we see in these mistakes a guarantee of the honesty and accuracy of the reports of the speech. The other day I read the objections of a critic to our Gospels. He wished to know, for instance, how the addresses of our Lord could have been preserved in an age when there was no shorthand. The answer is, however, simple enough, and conclusive: there was shorthand in that age.[1] Shorthand was then carried to such perfection that an epigram of Martial (xiv. 208), a contemporary poet, celebrating its triumphs may be thus translated:—

> "Swift though the words, the pen still swifter sped
> The hand has finish'd ere the tongue has said."

While even if the Jews knew nothing of shorthand, the human memory, as we have already noted, was then developed to a degree of which we have no conception. Now, whether transmitted by memory or by notes, this address of St. Stephen bears proofs of the truthfulness of the reporter in the mistakes it contains. A man anxious for the reputation of his hero would have corrected them, as parliamentary reporters are accustomed to make the worst speeches readable, correcting evident blunders, and improving the grammar. The reporter of St. Stephen's words, on the contrary, gave them to us just as they were spoken. But then, I may be asked, how do you account for St. Stephen's mistake? What explanation can you offer? My answer is simple and plain enough. I have no other explanation to offer except that they are mistakes such as a speaker, filled with his subject, and speaking to an excited and hostile audience, might

[1] See p. 108 above, where I have touched on this point.

naturally make; mistakes such as truthful speakers every day make in their ordinary efforts. Every man who speaks an extemporaneous discourse such as Stephen's was, full of references to past history, is liable to such errors. Even when the memory retains the facts most accurately, the tongue is apt to make such lapses. Let a number of names be mingled up together in a speech or sermon where frequent mention has to be made of one now and of another again, how easily in that case a speaker substitutes one for another. But it may be objected that it is declared of Stephen that he was "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," that "he was full of faith and power," and that his adversaries "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake." But surely this might be said of able, devoted, and holy men at the present day, and yet no one would say that they were miraculously kept from the most trivial mistakes, and that their memories and tongues were so supernaturally aided that they were preserved from the smallest verbal inaccuracies. We are always inclined to reverse the true scientific method of enquiry, and to form notions as to what inspiration must mean, instead of asking what, as a matter of fact, inspiration did mean and involve in the case of the Bible heroes. People when they feel offended by these mistakes of St. Stephen prove that they really think that Christianity was quite a different thing in the apostolic days from what it is now, and that the words "full of the Holy Ghost" and the presence of the Divine Spirit meant quite a different gift and blessing then from what they imply at the present time. I look upon the mistakes in this speech in quite a different light. St. Luke, in recording them exactly as they took place,

proves, not merely his honesty as a narrator, but he also has handed down to us a most important lesson. He teaches us to moderate our notions and to chasten our *à priori* expectations. He shows us we must come and study the Scriptures to learn what they mean by the gift and power of the Holy Spirit. St. Luke expressly tells us that Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, and then proceeds to narrate certain verbal inaccuracies and certain slips of memory to prove to us that the presence of the Holy Ghost does not annihilate human nature, or supersede the exercise of the human faculties. Just as in other places we find Apostles like St. Peter or St. Paul spoken of as equally inspired, and yet the inspiration enjoyed by them did not destroy their human weakness and infirmities, and, full of the Holy Ghost as they were, St. Paul could wax wroth and engage in bitter dissension with Barnabas, his fellow-labourer; and St. Peter could fall into hypocrisy against which his brother Apostle had publicly to protest. It is wonderful how liable the mind is, in matters of religion, to embrace exactly the same errors age after age, manifesting themselves in different shapes. Men are ever inclined to form their theories beforehand, and then to test God's actions and the course of His Providence by those theories, instead of reversing the order, and testing their theories by facts as God reveals them. This error about the true theory of inspiration and the gifts of the Holy Ghost which Protestants have fallen into is exactly the same as two celebrated mistakes, one in ancient, the other in modern times. The Eutychian heresy was very celebrated in the fifth century. It split the Eastern Church into two parts, and prepared the way for the triumph of Mahometanism. It fell, too, into this same error. It

formed an *à priori* theory of God and His nature. It determined that it was impossible for the nature of Deity to be united to a nature which could feel hunger and thirst and weakness, because that God cannot be affected by any human weakness or wants. It denied, therefore, the real humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the reality of His human life and actions; teaching that His human body was not real, but merely a phenomenal or apparent one, and then explaining away all the statements and facts of Gospel history which seemed to them to conflict with their own private theory. In the West we have had ourselves experience of the same erroneous method of argument. The adherents of the Church of Rome argue for the infallibility of the Pope in the same way. They dilate on the awful importance of religious truth, and the fearful consequences of a mistake in such matters. Hence they conclude that it is only natural and fitting that a living, speaking, teaching, infallible guide should be appointed by God to direct the Church, and thence they conclude the infallibility of the Pope; a method of argument which has been amply exposed by Dr. Salmon in his work on the Infallibility of the Church. The Roman Catholics form their theory first, and when they come to facts which conflict with their theory, they deny them or explain them away in the most extraordinary manner.

Protestants themselves, however, are subject to the same erroneous methods. They form a theory about the Holy Ghost and His operations. They conclude, as is true, that He is Himself right, and just, and true in all His doings, and then they conclude that all the men whom He chose in the earliest age of the Church, and who are mentioned in Scripture as endued with His

grace, must have been as free from every form of error as the Holy Spirit Himself. They thus fashion for themselves a mere *à priori* theory like the Eutychian and the Romanist, and then, when they apply their theory to passages like St. Stephen's speech, they feel compelled to deny facts and offer forced explanations, and to reject God's teaching as it is embodied in the divinely taught lessons of history. Let us be honest, fearless students of the Scriptures. St. Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, and as such his great, broad, spiritual lessons were taught by the Spirit, and commend themselves as Divine teaching to every Christian heart. But these lessons were given through human lips, and had to be conveyed through human faculties, and as such are not free from the imperfections which attach themselves to everything human here below. Surely it is just the same still. God the Holy Ghost dwells with His people as of old. There are men even in this age of whom it still may be said, that in a special sense "they are full of the Holy Ghost," a blessing granted in answer to faithful prayer and devout communion and a life lived closely with God. The Holy Spirit speaks through them and in them. Their sermons, even on the simplest topics, speak with power, they teem with spiritual unction, they come home with conviction to the human conscience. Yet surely no one would dream of saying that these men are free from slips of speech and lapses of memory in their extemporaneous addresses, or in their private instructions, or in their written letters, because the Holy Ghost thus proves His presence and His power in His people as of old. The human heart and conscience easily and at once distinguish between that which is due to human weakness and what to Divine grace, according to that most

pregnant saying of an Apostle himself gifted above all others, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." This view may be startling to some persons who have been accustomed to look to the Bible as some persons look to the Pope, as an oracle which will give them infallible guidance on every topic without the exercise of any thought or intelligence on their own part. Yet it is no original or novel notion of my own, but one that has been luminously set forth by a devout expositor of Scripture, dealing with this very passage many years ago. Dr. Vaughan, in his lectures on the Acts, preaching at Doncaster when vicar of that place, thus states his conclusions on this point:—"Now I will address one earnest word to persons who may have noticed with anxiety in this chapter, or who may have heard it noticed by others in a tone of cavil or disbelief, that in one or two minor points the account here given of Jewish history seems to vary from that contained in the narrative of the Old Testament. For example, the history in the book of Genesis tells us that the burying-place bought by Abraham was in Mamre or Hebron, not at Sychem; and that it was bought by him of Ephron the Hittite, Jacob (not Abraham) being the purchaser of the ground at Shechem of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father. My friends, can you really suppose that a difference of this nature has anything to do, this way or that, with the substantial truth of the gospel revelation? I declare to you that I would not waste the time in endeavouring (if I was able) to reconcile such a variance. It is to be regretted that Christian persons, in their zeal for the literal accuracy of our Holy Book, have spoken and written as if they thought that anything could possibly depend upon such a question. We all know

how easy it is to get two witnesses in a court of justice to give their stories of an occurrence in the same words. We know also how instant is the suspicion of falsehood which that formal coincidence of statement brings upon them. Holy Scripture shows what I may indeed call a noble superiority to all such uniformity. Each book of our Bible is an independent witness; shown to be so, not least, by verbal or even actual differences on some trifling points of detail. And they who drink most deeply at the fountain head of Divine truth learn to estimate these things in the same manner; to feel what we might describe as a lordly disdain for all infidel objections drawn from this sort of petty, paltry, cavilling, carping, creeping criticism. Let our faith at last, God helping us, be strong enough and decided enough to override a few or a multitude of such objections. We will hear them unmoved; we will fearlessly examine them; if we cannot resolve them, then, in the power of a more majestic principle, we will calmly turn from them and pass them by. What we know not now, we may know hereafter; and if we never know we will believe still." These are wise words, very wholesome, very practical, and very helpful in this present age.

III. Let us briefly gather yet another lesson from this passage. The declaration of the Church's catholicity and the universal nature of Christian worship contained in verses 47-50 deserve our attention. What did St. Stephen say?—"But Solomon built Him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands; as saith the prophet, The heaven is My throne, and the earth the footstool of My feet; what manner of house will ye build Me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of My rest? Did not My hand make

all these things?" These words must have sounded as very extraordinary and very revolutionary in Jewish ears, because they most certainly struck at the root of the exclusive privilege claimed for Jerusalem, that it was the one place upon earth where acceptable worship could be offered, and where the Divine presence could be manifested. It seems no wonder that they should have roused the Sanhedrin to the pitch of fury which ended in the orator's judicial murder. But these words have been at times pressed farther than Stephen intended. He merely wished to teach that God's special and covenanted presence was not for the future to be limited to Jerusalem. In the new dispensation of the Messiah whom he preached, that special covenanted presence would be found everywhere. Where two or three should be gathered in Christ's name there would God's presence be found. These words of Stephen have sometimes been quoted as if they sounded the death-knell of special places dedicated to the honour and glory of God, such as churches are. It is evident, however, that they have no such application. They sounded the death-knell of the exclusive privilege of one place, the temple, but they proclaimed the freedom which the Church has ever since claimed, and the Jewish Church of the dispersion, by the institution of synagogues, had led the way in claiming teaching that wherever true hearts and true worshippers are found, there God reveals Himself. But we must bear in mind a distinction. Stephen and the Apostles rejected the exclusive right of the Temple as the one place of worship for the world. They asserted the right to establish special places of worship throughout the world. They rejected the exclusive claims of Jerusalem. But they did not reject the right and the duty of God's people

to assemble themselves as a collective body for public worship, and to realize Christ's covenanted presence. This is an important limitation of St. Stephen's statement. The absolute duty of public collective worship of the Almighty cannot be too strongly insisted upon. Men neglect it, and they support themselves by an appeal to St. Stephen's words, which have nothing to do with public worship more than with private worship. The Jews imagined that both public and private worship offered in the Temple had some special blessing attached, because a special presence of God was there granted. St. Stephen attacked this prejudice. His words must, however, be limited to the exact point he was then dealing with, and must not be pressed farther. Private prayer was binding on all God's people in the new and freer dispensation, and so, too, public worship has a special covenant blessing attached to it, and the blessing cannot be obtained if people neglect the duty. Public worship has been by Protestants looked at too much, as if it were only a means of their own edification, and thus, when they have thought that such edification could be as well or better attained at home, by reading a better sermon than they might chance to hear in the public congregation, they have excused their absence to their own conscience. But public worship is much more than a means of edification. It is the payment of a debt of worship, praise, and adoration due by the creature to the Creator. In that duty personal edification finds a place, but a mere accidental and subsidiary place. The great end of public worship is worship, not hearing, not edification even, though edification follows as a necessary result of such public worship when sincerely offered. The teaching of St. Stephen did not then apply to the erection of churches and buildings set apart for God's

service, or to the claim made for public worship as an exercise with a peculiar Divine promise annexed. It simply protests against any attempt to localise the Divine presence to one special spot on earth, making it and it alone the centre of all religious interest. St. Stephen's words are indeed but a necessary result of the ascension of Christ as we have already expounded its expediency. Had Christ remained on earth, His personal presence would have rendered the Church a mere local and not an universal institution; just as the doctrine of Roman Catholics about the Pope as Christ's Vicar, and Rome as his appointed seat, has so far invested Rome with somewhat of the characteristics of Jerusalem and the Temple. But our Lord ascended up on high that the hearts and minds of His people might likewise ascend to that region where, above time, and sense, and change, their Master evermore dwells, as the loadstone which secretly draws their hearts, and guides their tempest-tossed spirits across the stormy waters of this world to the haven of everlasting rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYRDOM.

"And they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death."—ACTS vii. 58-60; viii. 1.

THE apology of Stephen struck the keynote of Christian freedom, traced out the fair proportions of the Catholic Church, while the actual martyrdom of Stephen taught men that Christianity was not only the force which was to triumph, but the power in which they were to suffer, and bear, and die. Stephen's career was a type of all martyr lives, and embraces every possible development through which Christ's Church and His servants had afterwards to pass,—obscurity, fame, activity, death, fixing high the standard for all ages.

I. We have in this passage, telling the story of that martyrdom, a vast number of topics, which have formed the subject-matter of Christian thought since apostolic times. We have already remarked that the earliest quotation from the Acts of the Apostles connects itself with this scene of Stephen's martyrdom. Let us see how this came about. One hundred and forty years later than Stephen's death, towards the close of the second century, the Churches of Vienne and Lyons

were sending an account of the terrible sufferings through which they had passed during a similar sudden outburst of the Celtic pagans of that district against the Christians. The aged Pothinus, a man whose life and ministry touched upon the apostolic age, was put to death, suffering violence very like that to which St. Stephen was subjected, for we are told expressly by the historian Eusebius that the mob in its violence flung missiles at him. "Those at a distance, whatsoever they had at hand, every one hurled at him, thinking it would be a great sin if they fell short in wanton abuse against him."[1] The Church of Lyons, according to the loving usage of those early times, sent an account of all their trouble to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, that they might read it at the celebration of the Eucharist for their own comfort and edification. They entered into great details, showing how wonderfully the power of God's grace was manifested, even in the weakest persons, sustaining their courage and enabling them to witness. The letter then goes on to note the marvellous humility of the sufferers. They would not allow any one to call them martyrs. That name was reserved to Jesus Christ, "the true and faithful Martyr," and to those who had been made perfect through death. Then, too, their charity was wonderful, and the epistle, referring to this very incident, tells how they prayed "like Stephen, that perfect martyr, Lord, impute not this sin to them." The memory of St.

[1] Epistle of the Church of Lyons in Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, v. 1. This letter relates the earliest Celtic martyrdoms of which we have any knowledge. They took place at the annual Convention of the Celtic tribes of Gaul, which assembled at Lyons and Vienne. These conventions were much the same as the assembly at Tara in Meath, where St. Patrick began the work of converting Ireland. See my *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, chap. iv., and also p. 9 above.

Stephen served to nerve the earliest Gallic martyrs, and it has ever since been bound up with the dearest feelings of Christians. The arrangements of the Calendar, with which we are all familiar, are merely an expression of the same feeling as that recorded in the second-century document we have just now quoted. Christmas Day and St. Stephen's Day are closely united,—the commemoration of Christ's birth is joined with that of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, because of a certain spiritual instinct. Christmas Day records the fact of the Incarnation, and then we have according to the order of the Calendar three holy days, St. Stephen's, St. John's, and the Holy Innocents' Day, which follow one another in immediate succession. Many persons will remember the explanation of an old commentator on the Calendar and Liturgy, of which Keble makes a very effective use in his hymns in the *Christian Year* set apart for those days. There are three classes of martyrs: one in will and deed like St. Stephen,—this is the highest class, therefore he has place next to Christ; another in will, but not in deed, like St. John the Divine, who was ready to suffer death but did not,—this is the second rank, therefore his place comes next St. Stephen; and lastly come the Holy Innocents, the babes of Bethlehem, martyrs in deed but not in will, and therefore in the lowest position. The Western Church, and specially the Church of Northern Europe, has always loved the Christmas season, with its cheerful fires, its social joys, its family memories; and hence, as it was in the Church of the second century, so with ourselves, none has a higher or dearer place in memory, doubtless largely owing to this conjunction, than the great protc-martyr. Men have delighted, therefore, to trace spiritual analogies and

relationships between Stephen and Christ; fanciful perhaps some of them are, but still they are devout fancies, edifying fancies, fancies which strengthen and deepen the Divine life in the soul. Thus they have noted that Christmas Day and St. Stephen's Day are both natal days. In the language of the ancient Church, with its strong realizing faith, men spoke of a saint's death or martyrdom as his *dies natalis*. This is, indeed, one of the many traces of primitive usage which the Church of Rome has preserved, like a fly fixed in amber, petrified in the midst of her liturgical uses. She has a Martyrology which the ordinary laity scarcely ever see or use, but which is in daily use among the clergy and the various ecclesiastical communities connected with that Church. It is in the Latin tongue, and is called the *Martyrologium Romanum*, giving the names of the various saints whose memories are celebrated upon each day throughout the year, and every such day is duly styled the natal or birthday of the saint to whom it is appropriated. The Church of Rome retains this beautiful custom of the primitive Church, which viewed the death-day of a saint as his birthday into the true life, and rejoiced in it accordingly. That life was not, in the conception of the primitive believers, a life of ghosts and shadows. It was the life of realities, because it was the life of eternity, and therefore the early Christians lived for it, they longed for it, and counted their entrance upon it their true natal or birthday. The Church brought the two birthdays of Christ and Stephen into closest union, and men saw a beautiful reason for that union, teaching that Christ was born into this lower world in order that Stephen might be born into the heavenly world. The whole of that dreadful scene enacted at Jerusalem was transformed by the power of that

beautiful conception. Stephen's death was no longer a brutal murder; faith no longer saw the rage, the violence, the crushed body, the mangled and outraged humanity. The birthday of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation of the Master, transfigured the death-scene of the servant, for the shame and sufferings were changed into peace and glory; the execrations and rage of the mob became angelic songs, and the missiles used by them were fashioned into messengers of the Most High, ushering the faithful martyr through a new birth into his eternal rest. Well would it be for the Church at large if she could rise to this early conception more frequently than she commonly does. Men did not then trouble themselves about questions of assurance, or their Christian consciousness. These topics and ideas are begotten on a lower level, and find sustenance in a different region. Men like Stephen and the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons lived in the other world; it was the world of all their interests, of all their passionate desires, of all their sense of realities. They lived the supernatural life, and they did not trouble themselves with any questions about that life, no more than a man in sound physical health and spirits cares to discuss topics dealing with the constitution of the life which he enjoys, or to debate such unprofitable questions as, How do I know that I exist at all? Christians then knew and felt they lived in God, and that was enough for them. We have wandered far enough afield, however; let us retrace our steps, and seek to discover more in detail the instruction for the life of future ages given us in this first martyr scene.

II. We have brought before us the cause of the sudden outburst against Stephen. For it was an outburst, a popular commotion, not a legal execution.

We have already explained the circumstances which led the Sanhedrin to permit the mob to take their own course, and even to assist them in doing so. Pilate had departed; the imperial throne too was vacant in the spring or early summer of the year 37; there was an interregnum when the bonds of authority were relaxed, during which the Jews took leave to do as they pleased, trusting that when the bonds were again drawn tight the misdeeds of the past and the irregularities committed would be forgotten and forgiven. Hence the riot in which Stephen lost his life. But what roused the listeners—Sanhedrists, elders, priests, and people alike—to madness? They heard him patiently enough, just as they afterwards heard his successor Paul, till he spoke of the wider spiritual hope. Paul, as his speech is reported in the twenty-second chapter, was listened to till he spoke of being sent to the Gentiles. Stephen was listened to till he spoke of the free, universal, spiritual character of the Divine worship, tied to no place, bounded by no locality. Then the Sanhedrin waxed impatient, and Stephen, recognising with all an orator's instinct and tact that his opportunity was over, changes his note—charging home upon his hearers the same spirit of criminal resistance to the leadings of the Most High as their fathers had always shown. The older Jews had ever resisted the Holy Ghost as He displayed His teaching and opened up His purposes under the Old Dispensation; their descendants had now followed their example in withstanding the same Divine Spirit manifested in that Holy One of whom they had lately been the betrayers and murderers. It is scarcely any wonder that such language should have been the occasion of his death. How exactly he follows the example of our Saviour! Stephen used strong language,

and so did Jesus Christ. It has even been urged of late years that our Lord deliberately roused the Jews to action, and hastened His end by His violent language of denunciation against the ruling classes recorded in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew. There is, however, a great lesson of eternal significance to be derived from the example of St. Stephen as well as of our Lord. There are times when strong language is useful and necessary. Christ's ordinary ministry was gentle, persuasive, mild. He did not strive nor cry, neither did any man hear His voice in the streets. But a time came when, persuasion having failed of its purpose, the language of denunciation took its place, and helped to work out in a way the Pharisees little expected the final triumph of truth. Stephen was skilful and gentle in his speech; his words must at first have sounded strangely flattering to their prejudices, coming from one who was accused as a traitor to his race and religion. Yet when the gentle words failed, stern denunciation, the plainest language, the keenest phrases,—"Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," "Betrayers and murderers of the Righteous One,"—prove that a Christian martyr then, and Christ's martyrs and witnesses of every age, are not debarred under certain circumstances from the use of such weapons. But it is hard to know when the proper time has come for their employment. The object of every true servant and witness of Christ will be to recommend the truth as effectually as possible, and to win for it acceptance. Some people seem to invert this course, and to think that it is unworthy a true follower of Christ to seek to present his message in an attractive shape. They regard every human art and every human motive or principle as so thoroughly bad that men should dis-

regard and despise them. Human eloquence, or motives of policy and prudence, they utterly reject. Their principles lead some of them farther still. They reject the assistance which art and music and literature can lend to the cause of God, and the result is that men, specially as they grow in culture and civilisation, are estranged from the message of everlasting peace. Some people, with a hard, narrow conception of Christianity, are very responsible for the alienation of the young and the thoughtful from the side of religion through the misconceptions which they have caused. God has made the doctrines of the cross repugnant to the corrupt natural feelings of man, but it is not for us to make them repugnant to those good natural principles as well which the Eternal Father has implanted in human nature, and which are an echo of His own Divine self in the sanctuary of the heart. It is a real breach of charity when men refuse to deal tenderly in such matters with the lambs of Christ's flock, and will not seek, as St. Stephen and the apostles did, to recommend God's cause with all human skill, enlisting therein every good or indifferent human motive. Had St. Stephen thought it his duty to act as some unwise people do now, we should never have had his immortal discourse as a model for faithful and skilful preaching. We should merely have had instead the few words of vigorous denunciation with which the address closed. At the same time the presence of these stern words proves that there is a place for such strong language in the work of the Christian ministry. There is a time and place for all things, even for the use of strong language. The true teacher will seek to avoid giving unnecessary offences, but offence sharp and stern may be an absolute duty of charity when prejudice and bigotry and

party spirit are choking the avenues of the soul, and hindering the progress of truth. And thus John the Baptist may call men a generation of vipers, and Paul may style Elymas a child of the devil, and Christ may designate the religious world of His day as hypocrites; and when occasion calls we should not hesitate to brand foul things with plain names, in order that men may be awakened from that deadly torpor into which sin threatens to fling them. The use of strong language by St. Stephen had its effect upon his listeners. They were sawn asunder in their hearts, they gnashed their teeth upon the martyr. His words stirred them up to some kind of action. The Gospel has a double operation, it possesses a twofold force—the faithful teaching of it cannot be in vain. To some it will be the savour of life unto life, to others the savour of death unto death. Opposition may be indeed unwisely provoked. It may be the proof to us of nothing else save our own wilfulness, our own folly and imprudence. But if Christian wisdom be used, and the laws of Christian charity duly observed, then the spirit of opposition and the violence of rage and persecution prove nothing else to the sufferers than that God's word is working out His purposes, and bringing forth fruit though it be unto destruction.

III. Again, the locality, the circumstances, and the surroundings of Stephen's martyrdom deserve a brief notice. The place of his execution is pointed out by Christian tradition, and that tradition is supported by the testimony of Jewish custom and of Jewish writings. He was tried in the Temple precincts, or within sight of it, as is manifest from the words of the witnesses before the council, "He ceaseth not to speak against *this* holy place. We have heard him say that

this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy *this* place." The mob then rushed upon him. Under ordinary circumstances the Roman garrison stationed in the neighbouring town of Antonia, which overlooked the temple, would have noticed the riot, and have hastened to intervene, as they did many years after, when St. Paul's life was threatened in a similar Jewish outburst. But the political circumstances, as we have already shown, were now different.[1] Roman authority was for the moment paralysed in Jerusalem. People living at great centres such as Rome once was, or London now is, have no idea how largely dependent distant colonies or outlying districts like Judæa are upon personal authority and individual lives. In case of a ruler's death the action of the officials and of the army becomes necessarily slow, hesitating; it loses that backbone of energy, decision, and vigour which a living personal authority imparts. The decease of the Roman Emperor synchronising with the recall of Pontius Pilate must have paralysed the action of the subordinate officer then commanding at Antonia, who, unaware what turn events might take, doubtless thought that he was safe in restraining himself to the guardianship and protection of purely Roman interests.

The scene of Stephen's murder is sometimes located in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, near the brook Kedron, under the shadow of Olivet, and over against the Garden of Gethsemane. To that spot the gate of Jerusalem, called the Gate of St. Stephen, now leads.[2]

[1] See chap. xiii., p. 248, above.

[2] See *Survey of Western Palestine*, iii., 126 and 383-88, where an account is given of the ruins of the ancient church erected in honour of St. Stephen by the Empress Eudocia, about A.D. 440. It is on the north side of Jerusalem.

Another tradition assigns the open country north-east of Jerusalem, on the road to Damascus and Samaria, as the place consecrated by the first death suffered for Jesus Christ. It is, however, according to the usual practice of Holy Scripture to leave this question undecided, or rather completely disregarded and overlooked. The Scriptures were not written to celebrate men or places, things temporary and transient in themselves, and without any bearing on the spiritual life. The Scriptures were written for the purpose of setting forth the example of devotion, of love, and of sanctity presented by its heroes, and therefore it shrouds all such scenes as that of Stephen's martyrdom in thickest darkness. There is as little as possible of what is merely local, detailed, particular about the Scriptures. They rise into the abstract and the general as much as is consistent with being a historical narrative. Perhaps no spot in the world exhibits more evident and more abundant proofs of this Divine wisdom embodied in the Scriptures than this same city of Jerusalem as we now behold it. What locality could be more dear to Christian memory, or more closely allied with Christian hope, than the Holy Places, as they are emphatically called—the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and its surroundings? Yet the contending struggles of Roman Catholics, Greeks, and Armenians have made the whole subject a reproach and disgrace, and not an honour to the Christian name, showing how easily strife and partisanship and earthly passions enter in and usurp the ground which is nominally set apart for the honour of Christ Jesus. It is very hard to keep the spirit of the world out of the most sacred seasons or the holiest localities.

Stephen is hurried by the mob to this spot outside

the Holy City, and then they proceed in regular judicial style so far as their fury will allow them. Dr. John Lightfoot, in his great work *Horæ Hebraicæ*, dealing with this passage, notes how we can trace in it the leading ideas and practices of Jewish legal processes. The Sanhedrin and their supporters dragged St. Stephen out of the city because it was the law as laid down in Lev. xxiv. 14—"Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp." The Jews still retained vivid memories of their earlier history, just as students of sociology and ethnology still recognise in our own practices traces of ancient pre-historic usages, reminiscences of a time, ages now distant from us, when our ancestors lived the savage life in lands widely separated from our modern homes. So did the Jews still recognise the nomad state as their original condition, and even in the days of our Saviour looked upon Jerusalem as the camp of Israel, outside of which the blasphemer should be stoned.

Lightfoot then gives the elaborate ceremonial used to insure a fair trial, and the re-consideration of any evidence which might turn up at the very last moment. A few of the rules appointed for such occasions are well worth quoting, as showing the minute care with which the whole Jewish order of execution was regulated: "There shall stand one at the door of the Sanhedrin having a handkerchief in his hand, and an horse at such a distance as it was only within sight. If any one therefore say, I have something to offer on behalf of the condemned person, he waves the handkerchief, and the horseman rides and calls the people back. Nay, if the man himself say, I have something to offer in my own defence, they bring him back four or five times one after another, if it be a thing of any moment

he has to say." I doubt, adds Lightfoot, they hardly dealt so gently with the innocent Stephen. Lightfoot then describes how a crier preceded the doomed man proclaiming his crime, till the place of execution was reached; where, after he was stripped of his clothes, the two witnesses threw him violently down from a height of twelve feet, flinging upon him two large stones. The man was struck by one witness in the stomach, by the other upon the heart, when, if death did not at once ensue, the whole multitude lent their assistance. Afterwards the body was suspended on a tree. It will be evident from this outline of Lightfoot's more prolonged and detailed statement that the leading ideas of Jewish practice were retained in St. Stephen's case; but as the execution was as much the act of the people as of the Sanhedrin, it was carried out hurriedly and passionately. This will account for some of the details left to us. We usually picture to ourselves St. Stephen as perishing beneath a deadly hail of missiles, raised upon him by an infuriated mob, before whom he is flying, just as men are still maimed or killed in street riots; and we wonder therefore when or where St. Stephen could have found time to kneel down and commend his spirit to Christ, or to pray his last prayer of Divine charity and forgiveness under such circumstances as those we have imagined. The Jews, however, no matter how passionate and enraged, would have feared to incur the guilt of murder had they acted in this rough-and-ready method. The witnesses must first strike their blows, and thus take upon themselves the responsibility for the blood about to be shed if it should turn out innocent. The culprits, too, were urged to confess their sin to God before they died. Stephen may have taken advantage of this well-known form to kneel down and

offer up his parting prayers, which displaying his steadfast faith in Jesus only stirred up afresh the wrath of his adversaries, who thereupon proceeded to the last extremities.[1]

Stephen's death was a type of the vast majority of future martyrdoms, in this among other respects: it was a death suffered for Christ, just as Christ's own death was suffered for the world at large, and that under the forms of law and clothed with its outward dignity. Christianity proclaims the dignity of law and order, and supports it—teaches that the magistrate is the minister of God, and that he does a divinely-appointed work; but Christianity does not proclaim the infallibility of human laws or of human magistrates.[2] Christianity does not teach that any human law or human magistrate can dictate to the individual conscience, or intrude itself into the inner temple of the soul. Christianity indeed has, by a long and bitter experience, taught the contrary, and vindicated the rights of a free conscience, by patiently suffering all that could be done against it by the powers of the world assuming the forms and using the powers of law. Christians, I say, have taught the dignity of law and order, and yet they have not hesitated to resist and overturn bad laws, not however so much by active opposition as by the patient suffering of all that fiendish cruelty and lust could devise against the

[1] Dr. John Lightfoot in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* on Acts vii. 58, when dealing with this incident, enters into copious details as to the Jewish method of execution by stoning.

[2] The termination of St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, discovered some few years ago, is most instructive on this point. It is a litany or liturgical prayer used in the primitive Roman Church. Bishop Lightfoot, in his new edition of Clement, vol. i., p. 382, commenting on it, has some very interesting thoughts on the relation between early Christianity and the Roman State.

followers of the Cross. Just as it was under the forms of law that our Saviour died and Stephen was executed, and Peter and Paul passed to their rest, so was it under the same forms of law that the primitive Church passed through those ten great persecutions which terminated by seating her on the throne of the Cæsars. Law is a good thing. The absence of law is chaos. The presence of law, even though it be bad law, is better than no law at all. But the individual Christian conscience is higher than any human law. It should yield obedience in things lawful and indifferent. But in things clearly sinful the Christian conscience will honour the majesty of law by refusing obedience and then by suffering patiently and lovingly, as Stephen did, the penalty attached to conscientious disobedience.

IV. Let us now briefly notice the various points of interest, some of them of deep doctrinal importance, which gather round St. Stephen's death. We are told, for instance, that the martyr, seeing his last hour approaching, "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Surely critics must have been sorely in want of objections to the historical truth of the narrative when they raised the point that Stephen could not have looked up to heaven because he was in a covered chamber and could not have seen through the roof! This is simply a carping objection, and the expression used about St. Stephen is quite in keeping with the *usus loquendi* of Scripture. In the seventeenth of St. John, and at the first verse, we read of our Lord that lifting up His eyes to heaven" He prayed His great eucharistic prayer on behalf of His Apostles. He lifted His eyes to heaven though He was in the upper chamber at the time. The Scriptural idea of

heaven is not that of the little child, a region placed far away above the bright blue sky and beyond the distant stars, but rather that of a spiritual world shrouded from us for the present by the veil of matter, and yet so thinly separated that a moment may roll away the temporary covering and disclose the world of realities which lies behind. Such has been the conception of the deepest minds and the profoundest teaching. St. Stephen did not need a keen vision and an open space and a clear sky, free from clouds and smoke, as this objection imagines. Had St. Stephen been in a dungeon and his eyes been blind, the spiritual vision might still have been granted, and the consolation and strength afforded which the sight of his ascended Lord vouchsafed. This view of heaven and the unseen world is involved in the very word revelation, which, in its original Greek shape, apocalypse, means simply an uncovering, a rolling away of something that was flimsy, temporary, and transient, that a more abiding and nobler thing may be seen. The roof, the pillars, the solid structure of the temple, the priests and Levites, the guards and listeners, all were part of the veil of matter which suddenly rolled away from Stephen's intensified view, that he might receive, as the martyrs of every age have received, the special assistance which the King of Martyrs reserves for the supreme hour of man's need. The vision of our Lord granted at this moment has its own teaching for us. We are apt to conjure up thoughts of the sufferings of the martyrs, to picture to ourselves a Stephen perishing under a shower of stones, an Ignatius of Antioch flung to the beasts, a Polycarp of Smyrna suffering at the stake, the victims of pagan cruelty dying under the ten thousand forms of diabolical cruelty subsequently invented; and then we ask our-

selves, could we possibly have stood firm against such tortures? We forget the lesson of Stephen's vision. Jesus Christ did not draw back the veil till the last moment; He did not vouchsafe the supporting vision till the need for it had come, and then to Stephen, as to all His saints in the past, and to all His saints in the future, the Master reveals Himself in all His supporting and sustaining power, reminding us in our humble daily spheres that it is our part to do our duty, and bear such burdens as the Lord puts upon us now, leaving to Him all care and thought for the future, content simply to trust that as our day is so shall our grace and our strength be. Stephen's vision has thus a lesson of comfort and of guidance for those fretful souls who, not content with the troubles and trials of the present, and the help which God imparts to bear them, will go on and strive to ascertain how they are to bear imaginary dangers, losses, and temptations which may never come upon them.

Then, again, we have the final words of Stephen, which are full of important meaning, for they bear witness unto the faith and doctrine of the apostolic Church. They stoned Stephen, "calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" while again a few moments later he cried, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The latter petition is evidently an echo of our Lord's own prayer on the cross, which had set up a high standard of Divine charity in the Church. The first martyr imitates the spirit and the very language of the Master, and prays for his enemies as Christ himself had done a short time before; while the other recorded petition, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," is an echo likewise of our Lord's, when He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." We

note specially about these prayers, not only that they breathe the spirit of Christ Himself, but that they are addressed to Christ, and are thus evidences to us of the doctrine and practice of the early Church in the matter of prayer to our Lord. St. Stephen is the first distinct instance of such prayer, but the more closely we investigate this book of the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul, the more clearly we shall find that all the early Christians invoked Christ, prayed to Him as one raised to a supernatural sphere and gifted with Divine power, so that He was able to hear and answer their petitions. St. Stephen prayed to Christ, and commended his soul to Him, with the same confidence as Christ Himself commended His soul to the Father. And such commendation was no chance expression, no exclamation of adoring love merely. It was the outcome of the universal practice of the Church, which resorted to God through Jesus Christ. Prayer to Christ and the invocation of Christ were notes of the earliest disciples. Saul went to Damascus "to bind all that called upon the name of Jesus" (ch. ix. 14). The Damascene Jews are amazed at the converted Saul's preaching of Jesus Christ, saying, "Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them which called on this name?" (ch. ix. 21). While again Rom. x. 12 and 1 Cor. i. 2 prove that the same custom spread forth from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the Church. The passage to which I have just referred in the Corinthian Epistle is decisive as to St. Paul's teaching at a much later period than St. Stephen's death, when the Church had had time to formulate its doctrines and to weigh its teaching. Yet even then, he was just as clear on this point as Stephen years before, addressing his Epistle to the Church of God at Corinth, "with all that call upon the

name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place;" while again, when we descend to the generation which came next after the apostolic age, we find, from Pliny's celebrated letter written to Trajan, describing the practices and ideas of the Christians of Bithynia in the earliest years of the second century, that it was then the same as in St. Paul's day. One of the leading features of the new sect as it appeared to an intelligent pagan was this: "They sang an hymn to Christ as God." St. Stephen is the earliest instance of such worship directly addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ, a practice which has ever since been steadily maintained in every branch of the Church of Christ. It has been denied, indeed, in modern times that the Church of England in her formularies gives a sanction to this practice, which is undoubtedly apostolical. A reference, however, to the collect appointed for the memorial day of this blessed martyr would have been a sufficient answer to this assertion, as that collect contains a very beautiful prayer to Christ, beseeching assistance, similar to that given to St. Stephen, amid the troubles of our own lives. The whole structure of all liturgies, and specially of the English liturgy, protests against such an idea. The Book of Common Prayer teems with prayer to Jesus Christ. The Te Deum is in great part a prayer addressed to Him; so is the Litany, and so are collects like the prayer of St. Chrysostom, the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent, and the well-known prayer for the Third Sunday in Advent—"O Lord Jesu Christ, who at Thy first coming didst send Thy messenger to prepare Thy way."[1] The Eastern Church indeed ad-

[1] See on this point a note in Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, 14th edition, pp. 531-43, on the worship of Jesus Christ in the services of the Church of England.

dresses a greater number of prayers to Christ directly. The Western Church, basing itself on the promise of Christ, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you," has ever directed the greater portion of her prayers to the Father through the Son; but the few leading cases just mentioned, cases which are common to the whole Western Church, Reformed or unreformed, will prove that the West also has followed primitive custom in calling upon the name and invoking the help of the Lord Jesus Himself. And then when Stephen had given us these two lessons, one of faith, the other of practice; when he had taught us the doctrine of Christ's divinity and the worship due to Him, and the practice of Christian charity and the forgiving spirit which flows forth from it, even towards those who have treated His servants most cruelly, then Stephen "fell asleep," the sacred writer using an expression for death indicative of the new aspect which death had assumed through Christ, and which henceforth gave the name of cemeteries to the last resting-places of Christian people.

V. The execution of St. Stephen was followed by his funeral. The bodies of those that were stoned were also suspended on a tree, but there was no opposition to their removal, as afterwards in the great persecutions. The pagans, knowing that Christians preached the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, strove to prove the absurdity of this tenet by reducing the body to ashes. The Christians, however, repeatedly proved that they entertained no narrow views on this point, and did not expect the resurrection of the identical elements of which the earthly body was composed. They took a broader and nobler view of St. Paul's teaching in the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, and regarded the

natural body as merely the seed out of which the resurrection body was to be developed. This is manifest from some of the stories told us by ancient historians concerning the Christians of the second century. The martyrs of Vienne and Lyons have been already referred to, and their sufferings described. The pagans knew of their doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and thought to defeat it by scattering the ashes of the martyrs upon the waters of the Rhone; but the narrative of Eusebius tells us how foolish was this attempt, as if man could thus overcome God, whose almighty power avails to raise the dead from the ashes scattered over the ocean as easily as from the bones gathered into a sepulchre. Another story is handed down by a writer of Antioch named John Malalas, who lived about A.D. 600, concerning five Christian virgins, who lived some seventy years earlier than these Gallic martyrs, and fell victims to the persecution which raged at Antioch in the days of the Emperor Trajan, when St. Ignatius perished. They were burned to death for their constancy in the faith, and then their ashes were mingled with brass, which was made into basins for the public baths. Every person who used the basins became ill, and then the emperor caused the basins to be formed into statues of the virgins, in order, as Trajan said, that "it may be seen that I and not their God have raised them up."[1]

But while it is plainly evident from the records of history that the earliest Christians had no narrow views about the relation between the present body of humiliation and the future body of glory, it is equally manifest that they paid the greatest attention to the mortal re-

[1] See Malalas' *Chronographia*, lib. xi., and the article on Malalas in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, where this story is given at length.

mains of their deceased friends, and permitted the fullest indulgence in human grief. In doing so they were only following the example of their Master, who sorrowed over Lazarus, and whose own mortal remains were cared for by the loving reverence of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Christianity was no system of Stoicism. Stoicism was indeed the noblest form of Greek thought, and one which approached most closely to the Christian standpoint, but it put a ban upon human affection and feeling. Christianity acted otherwise. It flung a bright light on death, and illuminated the dark recesses of the tomb through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the prospect for humanity which that resurrection opens up. But it did not make the vain attempt of Stoicism to eradicate human nature. Nay, rather, Christianity sanctified it by the example of Jesus Christ, and by the brief notice of the mourning of the Church for the loss of their foremost champion, St. Stephen, which we find in our narrative. Such a gratification of natural feeling has never been inconsistent with the highest form of Christian faith. There may be the most joyous anticipation as to our friends who have been taken from us joined with the saddest reflections as to our own bereavement. We may be most assured that our loss is the infinite gain of the departed, and for them we mourn not; but we cannot help feeling that *we* have sustained a loss, and for *our* loss we must grieve. The feelings of a Christian even now must be thus mixed, and surely much more must this have been the case when "devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him."

The last results we note in this passage of Stephen's death are twofold. Stephen's martyrdom intensified

the persecution for a time. Saul of Tarsus was made for a while a more determined and active persecutor. His mental position, his intellectual convictions, had received a shock, and he was trying to re-establish himself, and quench his doubts, by intensifying his exertions on behalf of the ancient creed. Some of the most violent persecutions the Church has ever had to meet were set on foot by men whose faith in their own systems was deeply shaken, or who at times have had no faith in anything at all. The men whose faith had been shaken endeavoured, by their activity in defence of the system in which they once fully believed, to obtain an external guarantee and assurance of its truth; while the secret unbeliever was often the worst of persecutors, because he regarded all religions as equally false, and therefore looked upon the new teachers as rash and mischievous innovators.

The result then of Stephen's martyrdom was to render the Church's state at Jerusalem worse for the time. The members of the Church were scattered far and wide, all save the Apostles. Here we behold a notable instance of the protecting care of Providence over His infant Church. All save the Apostles were dispersed from Jerusalem. One might have expected that they would have been specially sought after, and would have been necessarily the first to flee. There is an early tradition, however, which goes back to the second century, and finds some support in this passage, that our Lord ordered the Apostles to remain in the city of Jerusalem for twelve years after the Ascension, in order that every one there might have an opportunity of hearing the truth.[1] His protecting hand was over the

[1] See Eusebius, v. 18; Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, vi. 5.

heads of the Church while the members were scattered abroad. But that same hand turned the apparent trial into the Church's permanent gain. The Church now, for the first time, found what it ever after proved to be the case. "They that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." The Church's present loss became its abiding gain. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. Violence reacted on the cause of those who employed it, as violence—no matter how it may temporarily triumph—always reacts on those who use it, whether their designs be intrinsically good or bad; till, in a widely disseminated Gospel, and in a daily increasing number of disciples, the eye of faith learned to read the clearest fulfilment of the ancient declaration, "The wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain."[1]

[1] St. Augustine, in his sermons on the festival of St. Stephen, concisely puts the matter thus: "Si Stephenus non nasset, ecclesia Paulum non haberet" ("If St. Stephen had not prayed, the Church would not have had St. Paul").

CHAPTER XVII.

SIMON MAGUS AND THE CONVERSION OF SAMARIA.

"And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. . . . But there was a certain man, Simon by name, which beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great."—ACTS viii. 5, 9, 10.

THE object of the earlier part of this book of the Acts is to trace the steady, gradual development of the Church among the Jews, the evolution, never ceasing for a moment, of that principle of true catholic and universal life which the Master implanted within her, and which never ceased working till the narrow, prejudiced, illiberal little company of Galileans, who originally composed the Church, became the emancipated Church of all nations. This process of development was carried on, as we have already pointed out, through the agency of the Hellenistic Jews, and specially of the deacons who were so intimately connected with that class. We have in the last few lectures surveyed the history of one deacon, St. Stephen; we are now led to the story of another, St. Philip. His activity, as described in the eighth chapter, runs upon exactly the same lines. St. Stephen proclaims the universal principles of the gospel; St. Philip acts upon these principles, going down to the city of Samaria, and

preaching Christ there.* The prominent position which the deacons had for the time taken is revealed to us by two notices. Philip leaves Jerusalem and goes to Samaria, where the power of the high priest and of the Sanhedrin does not extend, but would rather be violently resisted. Here he is safe for the time, till the violence of the persecution should blow over. And yet, though Philip has to leave Jerusalem, the Apostles remain hidden by the obscurity into which they had for a little fallen, owing to the supreme brilliancy of St. Stephen: "They were all scattered abroad except the Apostles." The deacons were obliged to fly, the Apostles could remain: facts which sufficiently show the relative positions the two classes occupied in the public estimation, and illustrate that law of the Divine working which we so often see manifesting itself in the course of the Church's chequered career, the last shall be first and the first last. God, on this occasion, as evermore, chooses His own instruments, and works by them as and how He pleases.

I. This reticence and obscurity of the Apostles may seem to us now somewhat strange, as it certainly does seem most strange how the Apostles could have remained safe at Jerusalem when all others had to fly. The Apostles naturally now appear to us the most prominent members of the Jerusalem, nay, farther, of the Christian Church throughout the world. But then, as we have already observed, one of the great difficulties in historical study is to get at the right point of view, and to keep ourselves at that point under very varying combinations of circumstances. We are apt to fling ourselves back, or, if the expression be allowed, to project ourselves backwards into the past, and to think that men must always have attributed the same import-

ance to particular persons or particular circumstances as we do. We now see the whole course of events, and can estimate them, not according to any mere temporary importance or publicity they may have attained, but according to their real and abiding influence. Viewing the matter in this light, we now can see that the Apostles were much more important persons than the deacons. But the question is, not how we regard the Apostles and the deacons, but how did the Sanhedrin and the Jews of Jerusalem in Stephen's and Philip's time view these two classes. They knew nothing of the Apostles as such.[1] They knew of them simply as unlearned and ignorant men who had been once or twice brought before the Council. They knew of Stephen, and perhaps, too, of Philip, as cultured Grecian Jews, whose wisdom and eloquence and persuasive power they were not able to resist; and it is no wonder that in the eyes of the Sadducean majority, who then ruled the Jewish senate, the deacons should be specially sought out and driven away.

[1] The very name Apostle connotes for us an extraordinary office and dignity, placing the Twelve upon an exalted plane far above all others. But the Jewish Council knew nothing of this. The term Apostle was in common use amongst the Jews. To us it seems almost presumptuous to apply the name to any but the Twelve, though the New Testament applies it more widely. The title Apostle was given among the Jews to the legate or Church officer who attended on every synagogue and discharged its commands. It was also specially bestowed upon the messengers of the Jewish high priest or patriarch who collected the temple tax while the temple existed, and afterwards the poll tax or tribute paid by every Jew throughout the world towards the support of the patriarch and the Sanhedrin. The name Apostle is found in this sense in the Theodosian Code down to so late a period as the fifth century. Our Lord and the early Church simply adopted this title Apostle from the synagogue, as they adopted so many other rites and usages, baptism, holy communion, the various orders of the ministry, and a liturgical service. .

The action of the Apostles themselves may have conduced to this. Here let us recur to a thought we have already touched upon. We are inclined to view the Apostles as if the Spirit which guided them totally destroyed their human personality and their human feelings. We are apt to cherish towards the Apostles the same reverential but misleading feeling which the believers of the early Church cherished towards the prophets, and against which St. James clearly protested when he said, "Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves." We are inclined to think of them as if there was nothing weak or human or mistaken about them, and yet there was plenty of all these qualities in their character and conduct. The Apostles were older than the deacons, and they were men of much narrower ideas, of a more restricted education. They had less of that facility of temper, that power of adaptation, which learning and travel combined always confer. They may have been somewhat suspicious too of the headlong course pursued by Stephen and his fellows. Their Galilean minds did not work out logical results so rapidly as their Hellenistic friends and allies. They had been slow of heart to believe with the Master. They were slow of heart and mind to work out principles and to grasp conclusions when taught by His servants and followers. The Apostles were, after all, only men, and they had their treasure in earthen vessels. Their inspiration, and the presence of the Spirit within their hearts, were quite consistent with intellectual slowness, and with mental inability to recognise at once the leadings of Divine Providence. It was just then the same as it has ever been in Church history. The older generation is always somewhat suspicious of the younger. It is slow to appreciate its ideas, hopes,

aspirations, and it is well perhaps that the older generation is suspicious, because it thus puts on a drag which gives time for prudence, forethought, and patience to come into play. These may appear very human motives to attribute to the Apostles, but then we lose a great deal of Divine instruction if we invest the Apostles with an infallibility higher even than that which Roman Catholics attribute to the Pope. For them the Pope is infallible only when speaking as universal doctor and teacher, a position which some among them go so far as to assert he has never taken since the Church was founded, so that in their opinion the Pope has never yet spoken infallibly. But with many sincere Christians the Apostles were infallible, not only when teaching, but when thinking, acting, writing on the most trivial topics, or discoursing on the most ordinary subjects.

II. Let us now turn our attention to Philip and his work, and its bearing on the future history and development of the Church. Here, before we go any farther, it may be well to note how St. Luke gained his knowledge of the events which happened at Samaria. We do not pretend indeed, like some critics, to point out all the sources whence the sacred writers gathered their information. Any one who has ever attempted to write history of any kind must be aware how impossible it often is for the writer himself to trace the sources of his information after the lapse of some time. How much more impossible then must it be for others to trace the original sources whence the sacred or any other ancient writers derived their knowledge, when hundreds and even thousands of years have elapsed. Our own ignorance of the past is a very unsafe ground indeed on which to base our rejection of any ancient document whatsoever

It is well, however, to note, where and when we can, the sources whence information may have been gained, and fortunately this book of the Acts supplies us with instruction on this very point. A quarter of a century later the same Saul who, doubtless, helped to make St. Philip fly on this occasion from Jerusalem, was dwelling for several days beneath his roof at Cæsarea. He was then Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, who bore in his own person many marks and proofs of his devotion to the cause which Philip had proclaimed and supported while Paul was still a persecutor. The story of the meeting is told us in the twenty-first chapter of this book. St. Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to pay that famous visit which led to his arrest, and, in the long run, to his visit to Rome and trial before Cæsar. He was travelling up to Jerusalem by the coast road which led from Tyre, where he landed, through Cæsarea, and thence to the Holy City. St. Luke was with him, and when they came to Cæsarea they entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, with whom they abode several days. What hallowed conversations St. Luke must there have listened to! How these two saints, Paul and Philip, would go over the days and scenes long since past and gone! How they would compare experiences and interchange ideas; and there it was that St. Luke must have had abundant opportunities for learning the history of the rise of Christianity in Samaria which here he exhibits to us.

Let us now look a little closer at the circumstances of the case. The place where Philip preached has raised a question. Some have maintained that it was Samaria itself, the capital city, which Philip visited and evangelized. Others have thought that it was a city,—some indefinite city of the district Samaria,

probably Sychar, the town where our Lord had taught the Samaritan woman. Some have held one view, some the other, but the Revised Version would seem to incline to the view that it was the capital city which St. Philip visited on this occasion, and not that city which our Lord Himself evangelized. It may to some appear an additional difficulty in the way of accepting Sychar as the scene of St. Philip's ministry, that our Lord's work and teaching some five years previously would, in that case, seem to have utterly vanished. Philip goes down and preaches Christ to a city which knew nothing of Him. How, some may think, could this have possibly been true, and how could such an impostor as Simon have carried all the people captive, had Christ Himself preached there but a few short years before, and converted the mass of the people to belief in Himself? Now I maintain that it was Samaria, the capital, and not Sychar, some miles distant, that Philip evangelized, but I am not compelled to accept this view by any considerations about Christ's own ministry and its results. Our Lord might have taught in the same city where Philip taught, and in the course of five years the effect of His personal ministry might have entirely vanished.

There is no lesson more plainly enforced by the gospel story than this, Christ's own personal ministry was a comparatively fruitless one. He taught the Samaritan woman, indeed, and the people of the city were converted, as they said, not so much by her witness as by the power of Christ's own words and influence. But then the Holy Ghost was not yet given, the Church was not yet founded, the Divine society which Christ, as the risen Saviour, was to establish, had not yet come into existence; and there-

fore work like that done at Samaria was a transient thing, passing away like the morning cloud or the early dew, and leaving not a trace behind. Christ came not to teach men a Divine doctrine, so much as to establish a Divine society, and, till this society was established, the work done even by Christ Himself was a fleeting and evanescent thing. The foundation of the Church as a society was absolutely necessary if the doctrine and teaching of Christ was to be preserved. The article of the creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," has been neglected, slighted, and undervalued by Protestants. I have heard even of avowed expositors of the Apostles' Creed who, when they came to this article, have passed it over with a hasty notice because it did not fit into their narrow systems. And yet here again the Supreme wisdom of the Divine plan has been amply vindicated, and the experience of the New Testament has shown that if there had not been a Church instituted by Christ, and established with Himself as its foundation, rock, and chief corner-stone, the wholesome doctrine and the supernatural teaching of Christ would soon have vanished. I am here indeed reminded of the words and experience of one of the greatest evangelists who have lived since apostolic times. John Wesley, when dealing with a cognate subject, wrote to one of his earliest preachers about the importance of establishing Methodist societies wherever Methodist preachers found access, and he proceeds to urge the necessity for doing so on precisely the same grounds as those on which we explain the failure of our Lord's personal ministry, so far at least as present results were concerned. Wesley tells his correspondent that wherever Methodist teaching alone has been imparted, and Methodist societies have not been founded as well,

the work has been an utter failure, and has vanished away.

So it was with the Master, Christ Jesus. He bestowed His Divine instruction and imparted His Divine doctrine, but as the time for the outpouring of the Spirit and the foundation of the Church had not yet come, the total result of the personal work and labours of the Incarnate God was simply one hundred and twenty, or at most five hundred souls. It constitutes, then, to our mind no difficulty in the way of regarding Sychar as the scene of Philip's teaching, that Christ Himself may have laboured there a few years before, and yet that there should not have been a trace of His labours when St. Philip arrived. The Master might Himself have taught in a town, and yet His disciple's preaching a few years later might have been most necessary, because the Spirit was not yet given. The plain meaning, however, of the words of the Acts is that it was to the city of Samaria, the capital city, that Philip went; and it is most likely that to the capital city a character like Simon would have resorted, and not to any smaller town, as affording him the largest field for the exercise of his peculiar talents, just as afterwards we shall find, in the course of his history, that he resorted to the capital of the world, Rome itself, as the scene most effectual for his purposes.[1]

[1] Samaria, the capital, was at this period called by the Romans Sebaste. Herod the Great rebuilt it in honour of the emperors, and erected a splendid temple there, which he inaugurated with games and gladiatorial shows. It was a suitable spot for the peculiar talents of a man like Simon Magus, as in turn it would have been specially repugnant for every reason to a strict Jew. But a Divine instinct was leading Philip on to the revelation of God's purposes of love and mercy. See Joseph., *Antiqq.*, XV., viii., 5; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 245.

III. St. Philip went down, then, to Samaria and preached Christ there, and in Samaria he came across the first of those subtle opponents with whom the gospel has ever had to struggle,—men who did not directly oppose the truth, but who corrupted its pure morality and its simple faith by a human admixture, which turned its salutary doctrines into a deadly poison. Philip came to Samaria, and there he found the Samaritans carried away with the teaching and actions of Simon. The preaching of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, and the exercise of true miraculous power, converted the Samaritans, and were sufficient to work intellectual conviction even in the case of the Magician. All the Samaritans, Simon included, believed and were baptized. This is the introduction upon the stage of history of Simon Magus, whom the earliest Church writers, such as Hegesippus, the father of Church history, who was born close upon the time of St. John, and flourished about the middle of the second century, and his contemporary Justin Martyr, describe as the first of those gnostic heretics who did so much in the second and third centuries to corrupt the gospel both in faith and practice. The writings of the second and third centuries are full of the achievements and evil deeds of this man Simon, which indeed are related by some writers with so much detail as to form a very considerable romance. Here, then, we find a corroborative piece of evidence as to the early date of the composition of the Acts of the Apostles. Had the Acts been written in the second century, it would have given us some traces of the second-century tradition about Simon Magus; but having been written at a very early period, upon the termination of St. Paul's first imprisonment, it gives us simply the statement about

Simon Magus as St. Luke and St. Paul had heard it from the mouth of Philip the Evangelist. St. Luke tells us nothing more, simply because he had no more to tell about this first of the celebrated heretics. When we come to the second century Simon's story is told with much more embellishment. The main outlines are, however, doubtless correct. All Christian writers agree in setting forth that after the reproof which, as we shall see, Simon Peter the Apostle bestowed upon the magician, he became a determined opponent of the Apostles, especially of St. Peter, whose work he endeavoured everywhere to oppose and defeat. With this end in view he went to Rome, as Justin Martyr says, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, and as other writers say, in the time of Nero.

There he successfully deceived the people for some time. We have early notices of his success in the Imperial city. Justin Martyr is a writer who came close upon the apostolic age. He wrote an Apology for the Christians, which we may safely assign to some year about 150 A.D. At that time he was a man in middle life, whose elder contemporaries must have been well acquainted with the history and traditions of the previous century. In that first Apology Justin gives us many particulars about Christianity and the early Church, and he tells us, concerning Simon Magus, that his teaching at Rome was so successful in leading the Roman people astray that they erected a statue in his honour, between the two bridges. It is a curious fact, and one, too, which confirms the accuracy of Justin, that in the year 1574 there was dug up on the very spot indicated by Justin, the island in the Tiber, a statue bearing the inscription described by Justin, 'Semoni Sanco Deo Fidio." Critics, indeed, are

now pretty generally agreed that this statue was the one seen by Justin, but that it was originally erected in honour of a Sabine deity, and not of the arch-heretic as the Apologist supposed; though there are some who think that the appeal of Justin to a statue placed before men's eyes, and about which many at Rome must have known all the facts, could not have been made on such mistaken grounds. It is not altogether safe to build theories or offer explanations based on our ignorance, and opposed to the plain, distinct statements of a writer like Justin, who was a contemporary with the events of which he speaks. It seems indeed a plausible explanation to say that Justin Martyr mistook the name of a Sabine deity for that of an Eastern heretic. But there may have been two statues and two inscriptions on the island, one to the heretic, another to the ancient Sabine god. Later writers of the second and third centuries improved upon Justin's story, and entered into great details of the struggles between Simon and the two Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, terminating in the death of the magician when attempting to fly up to heaven in the presence of the Emperor Nero. His death did not, however, put an end to his influence. The evil which he did and taught lived long afterwards. His followers continued his teaching and proved themselves active opponents of the truth, seducing many proselytes by the apparent depth and subtlety of their views. Such is the history of Simon Magus as it is told in Church history, but we are now concerned simply with the statements put forward in the passage before us.[1] There Simon appears as a teacher who led the Samaritans captive by his sorcery,

[1] The story of the quarrels between Simon Magus and St. Peter has

which he used as the basis of his claim to be recognised as "that power of God which is called Great." Magic and sorcery have always more or less prevailed, and do still prevail, in the Eastern world, and have ever been used in opposition to the gospel of Christ, just as the same practices, under the name of Spiritualism, have shown themselves hostile to Christianity in Western Europe and in America. The tales of modern travellers in India and the East, respecting the wondrous performances of Indian jugglers, remind us strongly of the deeds of Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses, and illustrate the sorcery which Simon Magus used for the deception of the Samaritans. The Jews, indeed, were everywhere celebrated at this period for their skill in magical incantations—a well-known fact, of which we find corroborative evidence in the Acts. Bar-Jesus, the sorcerer who strove to turn the proconsul of Cyprus from the faith, was a Jew (Acts xiii. 6-12). In the nineteenth chapter we find the seven sons of Sceva, the Jewish priest, exercising the same trade of sorcery; while, as is well known from references in the classical writers, the Jews at Rome were famous for the same practices.

These statements of writers sacred and secular alike have been confirmed in the present age. There has been a marvellous discovery of ancient documents in Egypt within the last twelve or fifteen years, which were purchased by the Austrian government and duly transferred to Vienna, where they have been investigated.

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been used by the Tübingen school of critics in Germany to support their theory of a fundamental opposition between St. Paul and St. Peter. See Dr. Salmon's *Introduction*, chap. xix., for a full statement of this strange view.

They are usually called the Fayûm Manuscripts.[1] They contain some of the oldest documents now existing, and embrace among them large quantities of magical writings, with the Hebrew formulæ used by the Jewish sorcerers when working their pretended miracles. So wondrously does modern discovery confirm the statements and details of the New Testament!

It is not necessary now to discuss the question whether the achievements of sorcery and magic, either ancient or modern, have any reality about them, or are a mere clever development of sleight of hand, though we incline to the view which admits a certain amount of reality about the wonders performed, else how shall we account for the doings of the Egyptian magicians, the denunciations of sorcery and witchcraft contained in the Bible, as well as in many statements in the New Testament? A dry and cold age of materialism, without life and fire and enthusiasm, like the last century, was inclined to explain away such statements of the Scriptures. But man has now learned to be more distrustful of himself and the extent of his discoveries. We know so little of the spirit world, and have seen of late such strange psychological manifestations in connection with hypnotism, that the wise man will hold his judgment in suspense, and not hastily conclude, with the men of the eighteenth century, that possession with devils was only another name for insanity, and that the deeds of sorcerers were displays

[1] See about the Fayûm MSS. and their contents a series of articles in the Records of the *Contemporary Review* from December 1884, and in the *Expositor* for 1885 and 1888. These Fayûm documents go back to the remotest times, one of them being dated so long ago as 1200 B.C. It is very curious that this extraordinary discovery has been apparently overlooked by the great majority of English learned societies.

of mere unassisted human skill and subtlety.[1] As it was with the Jews, so was it with the Samaritans. They were indeed bitterly separated the one from the other, but their hopes, ideas, and faith were fundamentally alike. The relations between the Samaritans and the Jews were at the period of which we treat very like those which exist between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ulster,—professing different forms of the same faith, yet regarding one another with bitterer feelings than if far more widely separated. So it was with the Jews and Samaritans; but the existing hostility did not change nature and its essential tendencies, and therefore as the Jews practised sorcery, so did Simon, who was a native of Samaria; and with his sorcery he ministered to the Messianic expectation which flourished among the Samaritans equally as among the Jews. The Samaritan woman testified to this in her conversation with our Lord, and as she was a woman of a low position and of a sinful character, her language proves that her ideas must have had a wide currency among the Samaritan people. "The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will declare unto us all things." Simon took advantage of this expectation, and gave himself out to be "that power of God which is called

[1] Moll's work on hypnotism, which we have already several times quoted, admits the reality of Eastern magic, accounting for the mango trick which Indian jugglers perform, and which every Indian resident has seen, on the ground that even vegetables can be hypnotised. It may be hard for us to admit it, but such books compel us to allow that there may be more in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in our philosophy. The presence of the grand heathen temple at Sebaste or Samaria would have made it the fitter scene for Simon's magical incantations. Magic and Paganism always flourished side by side, as we see at Ephesus.

Great;" testifying by his assertion to the craving which existed all through the Jewish world for the appearance of the long-expected deliverer, a craving which we again find manifesting itself in the many political pretenders who sprang up in the regions of more orthodox Judaism, as Josephus amply shows. The world, in fact, and specially the world which had been affected with Jewish ideas and Jewish thought, was longing for a deeper teaching and for a profounder spiritual life than it had as yet known. It was athirst for God, yea, even for the living God; and when it could find nothing better, it turned aside and strove to quench the soul's desires at the impure fountains which magic and sorcery supplied.

IV. Philip the Evangelist came with his teaching into a society which acknowledged Simon as its guide, and his miracles at once struck the minds of the beholders. They were miracles worked, like the Master's, without any secret preparations, without the incense, the incantations, the muttered formulæ which accompanied the lying wonders of the magician. They formed a contrast in another direction too,—no money was demanded, no personal aims or low objects were served; the thorough unselfishness of the evangelist was manifest. Then, too, the teaching which accompanied the miracles was their best evidence. It was a teaching of righteousness, of holy living, of charity, of humility; it was transparently unworldly. It was not like Simon's, which gave out that he himself was some great one, and treated of himself alone; but it dealt with "the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ;" and the teaching and the miracles, testifying the one to the other, came home to the hearts of the people, leading them captive to the foot of the Cross. It has often been a debated question

whether miracles alone are a sufficient evidence of the truth of a doctrine, or whether the doctrine needs to be compared with the miracles to see if its character be worthy of the Deity. The teaching of the New Testament seems to be plainly this, that miracles, in themselves, are not a sufficient evidence. Our Lord warns His disciples that deceivers shall one day come working mighty signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if it be possible, even the very elect; and He exhorts His disciples to be on their guard against them. But while miracles alone are no sufficient evidence of the truth of a doctrine, they were a very needful assistance to the doctrines of the gospel in the age and country when and where Christianity took its rise. Whether the sorcery and magic and wonders of Simon, and the other false teachers against whom the Apostles had to contend, were true or false, genuine or mere tricks, still they would have given the false teachers a great advantage over the preachers of the gospel, had the latter not been armed with real divine supernatural power which enabled them, as occasion required, to fling the magical performances completely into the shade. The miraculous operations of the Apostles seem to have been restricted in the same way as Christ restricted the working of His own supernatural power. The Apostles never worked miracles for the relief of themselves or of their friends and associates. St. Paul was detained through infirmity of the flesh in Galatia, and that infirmity led him to preach the gospel to the Galatian Celts. He did not, perhaps he could not, employ his miraculous power to cure himself, just as our Lord refused to use His miraculous power to turn stones into bread. St. Paul depended upon human skill and love for his cure, using probably for that purpose the

medical knowledge and assistance of St. Luke, whom we find shortly afterwards in his company.[1] Miraculous power was bestowed upon the first Christian teachers, not for the purposes of display or of selfish gratification, but simply for the sake of God's kingdom and man's salvation.

And as it was with St. Paul so was it with his companions. Timothy was exhorted to betake himself to human remedies to cure his physical weakness, while when another apostolic man, Trophimus, was sick, he was left behind by the Apostle at Miletus till he should get well (2 Tim. iv. 20). Miracles were for the sake of unbelievers, not of believers, and for this purpose we cannot see how they could have been done without, under the circumstances in which the gospel was launched into the world. Man's nature had been so thoroughly corrupted, the whole moral atmosphere had been so permeated with wickedness, the whole moral tone of society had been so terribly lowered, that the Apostles might have come preaching the purest morality, the most Divine wisdom, and it would have fallen on ears so deaf, and eyes so blind, and hearts so seared and hardened, that it would have had no effect unless they had possessed miraculous power which, as occasion demanded, served to call attention to their teaching. But when the preliminary barriers had been broken down, and the miracles had fulfilled their purpose, then the preaching of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ did their work. Here again a thought comes forward on which we have already said a little. The subject matter of Philip's preaching is described in the fifth verse as Christ, "Philip went down to the city of

[1] See Acts xvi. 6-10, compared with Gal. iv. 13.

Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ," and then in the twelfth verse it is expanded for us into "the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." These two subjects are united. The kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. The Apostles taught no diluted form of Christianity. They preached the name of Jesus Christ, and they also taught a Divine society which He had established and which was to be the means of completing the work of Christ in the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles recognised the great truth, that a mere preaching of a philosophical or religious doctrine would have been of very little use in reforming the world. They therefore preached a Church which should be the pillar and ground of the truth, which should gather up, safeguard, and teach the truth whose principles the Apostles set forth. To put it in plain language, the Evangelist St. Philip must have taught the doctrine of a Church of Jesus Christ as well as of a doctrine of Jesus Christ. Had the doctrine of Jesus Christ been taught without and separate from the doctrine of a Church, the doctrine of Christ's person and character might have vanished, just as the doctrine of Plato or Aristotle or that of any of the great ancient teachers vanished. But Jesus Christ had come into the world to establish a Divine society, with ranks, gradations, and orderly arrangements; He had come to establish a kingdom, and they all knew then what a kingdom meant. For the Greek, Roman, or Jewish mind, a kingdom meant more even than it does for us. It meant in their conceptions a despotism where the king ordered and did just what he liked. The Romans, in fact, abominated the name king, and invented the term emperor instead, because for them the word king connoted what it does not connote for us,

the possession and exercise of absolute power. Yet, for all this, the Apostles preached Christ as a King and His society as a kingdom, because in that new society which He had called into existence, the graces, the gifts, the offices of the society are totally dependent upon and entirely subservient to Jesus Christ alone.

How wondrously the life, the activity, the fervour and power of the Church would have been changed had this truth been always recognised. The Church of Jesus Christ, as regards its hidden secret life, is a despotism. It depends upon Christ alone. It depends not upon the State, not upon man, not upon wealth or position or earthly influences of any kind: it depends upon Christ alone. The Church has often forgot this secret of its strength. It has trusted in the arm of flesh, and has relied upon human patronage and power, and then it has grown, perhaps, in grandeur and importance as far as the world is concerned; but, as it has grown in one direction, it has lost in the other, and that the only direction worthy a Church's attention. The temptation to rely on the help of the world alone has assailed the Church in various ways. It assails individual Christians, it assails congregations, it assails the Church at large. All of them, whether individuals, congregations, or churches, are apt to imagine that power and prosperity consist in wealth, or worldly position, or the number of adherents, forgetting that Christ alone is the source of power to the Church or to individual souls, and that where He is wanting, no matter what may be the outward appearance, or the numerical increase or the political influence, there indeed all true life has departed.

V. The results of Philip's teaching and work in Samaria were threefold.

(1) The Samaritans believed Philip, and among the believers was Simon. There are some people who teach faith and nothing else, and imagine that if they lead men to exercise belief then the whole work of Christianity is done. This incident at the very outset of the Church's history supplies a warning against any such one-sided teaching. The Samaritans believed, and so did Simon the Magician, who had for long deceived them. The very same word is used here for the faith exercised by the Samaritans and by Simon, as we find used to describe the belief of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, or of the Philippian jailer who accepted St. Paul's teaching amid all the terror of the earthquake and the opened prison. They were all intellectually convinced and had all accepted the Christian faith as a great reality. Intellectual faith in Christ is the basis on which a true living faith which works by love is grounded. A faith of the heart which is not based on a faith of the head is very much akin to a superstition. Of course we know that there are people whose faith is deep-rooted and fruitful who cannot state the grounds of their belief, but they are well aware that others can thus state it, that their faith is capable of being put into words and defended in argument. Intellectual faith in Christianity must ever be regarded as a gift of the Holy Ghost, according to that profound word of the Apostle, "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Ghost." But intellectual faith in the truth and reality of Christ's mission may exist in a heart where there is no sense of sin and of spiritual want, and then belief in Christ avails nothing. There were cravings after righteousness and peace in Samaritan bosoms, but there was none in one heart, at least, and that heart was

therefore unblessed. The results of St. Philip's work teach us that faith is not everything in the Christian life.

(2) Again we find that another result was, that the Samaritans were all baptized, including their arch-deceiver Simon. Philip, then, in the course of his preaching of Christ, must have told them of Christ's law of baptism. The preaching of the name of Jesus Christ and of the kingdom of God must have included a due setting forth of His laws and ordinances. We do no honour to Christ when we neglect any part of His revelation. If God has revealed any doctrine or any practice or any sacrament, it must be of the very greatest importance. The mere fact of its revelation by Him makes it of importance, no matter how we, in our short-sighted wisdom, may think otherwise. Philip set forth therefore the whole counsel of God, and as the result all the Samaritans were baptized, including Simon; but then again, as Simon's case taught that faith by itself availed not to change the heart, so Simon's case teaches that baptism, neither alone nor in conjunction with intellectual faith, avails to convert the soul and purify the character. God offers His graces and His blessings, faith and baptism, but unless there be receptivity, unless there be consent of the will, and a thirst of the soul and a longing of the heart after spiritual things, the graces and gifts of the Spirit will be offered in vain.

(3) And then, lastly, the final and abiding result of Philip's work was, there was great joy in that city. They rejoiced because their souls had found the truth, which can alone satisfy the cravings of the human heart and minister a joy which leaves no sting behind, but is a joy pure and exhaustless. The joys of earth

are always mixed, and the more mixed the more unsatisfying. The joy of a Christian soul which knows Christ and His preciousness, which has been delivered by Christ from deceit and impurity and vice, as these Samaritans had, and which feels and enjoys the new light thrown on life by Christ's revelations, that joy is a surpassing one, ravishing the soul, satisfying the intellect, purifying the life. There was great joy in that city, and no wonder, for as the poet has well sung, contrasting the "world's gay garish feast" with God's sacred consolations bestowed upon holy souls,—

> "Who, but a Christian, through all life
> That blessing may prolong?
> Who, through the world's sad day of strife,
> Still chant his morning song?
>
> "Such is Thy banquet, dearest Lord;
> O give us grace, to cast
> Our lot with Thine, to trust Thy word,
> And keep our best till last."[1]

[1] *The Christian Year*, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE APOSTLES AND CONFIRMATION.

"Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.' —ACTS viii. 14-18.

IN the last lecture we noticed the work of Philip in Samaria, the present one will deal with the mission of the Apostles Peter and John to complete and perfect that work.

The story, as told in the sacred narrative, is full of instruction. It reveals the ritual of the apostolic Church, the development of its organization and practice, the spiritual lessons which the earliest gospel teachers imparted and the latest gospel teachers will find applicable. Philip converted the Samaritans and laid the basis of a Christian Church. Word was at once brought of this new departure to the Apostles at Jerusalem, because it was a new step, a fresh development which must have given a great shock to the strict Jewish feeling, which regarded the gospel as limited by the bounds of orthodox Judaism. The Apostles may have felt some surprise at the news, but they evidently must have acknowledged the Samaritans as standing on

a higher level than the Gentiles, for they do not seem to have raised any such objections to their baptism as were afterwards urged against St. Peter when he preached to and baptized Cornelius. "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised," was the objection of the Jerusalem Church urged against St. Peter as regards Cornelius. The Samaritans were circumcised, and therefore this objection did not apply. The Jews, indeed, of Judæa and of Galilee hated the Samaritans with a perfect hatred, but neither hatred nor love is ever guided by reason. Our feelings always outrun our judgment, and the judgment of the Jews compelled them to recognise the Samaritans as within the bounds of circumcision, and therefore the Apostles tolerated, or at least did not except against, the preaching of the gospel to the Samaritans, and their admission by baptism into the Messianic kingdom. It is a phenomenon we often see repeated in our own experience. A brother or a relation alienated is harder to be won and is more bitterly regarded than a total stranger with whom we may have quarrelled, though, at the same time, reason, perhaps even pride and self-respect and regard for consistency, compel us to recognise that he occupies a different position from that of a perfect stranger. The conversion of the Samaritans must be viewed as one of the divinely-appointed steps in the plan of human unification, one of the divinely-appointed actions gently leading to the final overthrow of the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile which the earlier chapters of this book trace for us. How beautiful the order, how steady and regular the progress, that is set before us! First we have the call of the strict Jews, then that of the Hellenistic Jews, next that of the Samaritans, and then the step was not a long one from the admission

of the hated Samaritans to the baptism of the devout though uncircumcised Gentile, Cornelius. God does His work in grace, as in nature, by degrees. He teaches us that changes must come, and that each age of the Church must be marked by development and improvement; but He shows us here in His word how changes should be made,—not rashly, unwisely, impetuously, and therefore uncharitably, but gently, gradually, sympathetically, and with explanations abundantly vouchsafed to soothe the feelings and calm the fears of the weaker brethren. This method of the Divine government receives an illustration in this passage. God led the Church of the first age very gradually, and therefore we see the apostolic college steadily, though perhaps blindly and unconsciously, advancing on the road of progress and of Christian liberality.

We have in this section of primitive Church history a two-fold division: the action of the Apostles on one side, the attitude and conduct of Simon Magus on the other. Each division has quite distinct teaching. Let us in this chapter take note of the Apostles.

I. The Apostles who were at Jerusalem heard of the conversion of Samaria, and they at once sent thither Peter and John to supervise the work. The deacons had, for a time, appeared to supersede the Apostles before the world, but only in appearance. The Apostles retained the chief government in their own hands, though to the men of the time others seemed the more prominent workers. The Apostles gave free scope to the gifts entrusted to their brilliant subordinates, but none the less they felt their own responsibility as rulers of the Divine society, and never for a moment did they relinquish the authority over that society which God had entrusted to them. They felt that Christ had

instituted an organized society with ranks and offices duly graduated, with officials—of whom they were themselves the chief—assigned to their appointed tasks, and never did they surrender to any man their divinely-given power and authority. Philip might preach in Samaria; but though he was successful in winning converts, the Apostles claimed the right of inspecting and controlling his labours. They successfully solved a problem which has often proved a very troublesome one. They combined the exercise of power with the free play of enthusiasm, and the result was that the enthusiasm was shielded from mistakes, and the power was vivified by the touch of enthusiasm and prevented from falling into that cold, heartless, ice-like thing which autocratic rule, in Church and State alike, has so often become. What a picture and guide we here behold for the Church of all ages! What a needed lesson is here taught! What errors and schisms would have been avoided throughout the long ages which have since elapsed, had the example of the apostolic Church been more closely followed, had power been more sympathetic with enthusiasm, and enthusiasm more loving, obedient, and submissive as regards authority!

The Apostles recognised their own responsibility and acted upon their own sense of authority, and they sent forth Peter and John to minister in Samaria and supply what was wanting as soon as they heard of the work done by St. Philip. The persons whom the college of Apostles thus despatched are worthy of notice, and have a direct bearing on some of the great theological and social problems of this age. They sent Peter and John. Peter, then, was the messenger of the Apostles,—the sent one, not the sender. We can find nothing

of the supremacy of Peter in these early apostolic days of which men began to dream in later years. The supreme authority in the Church and the burden of the Christian ministry were laid upon the twelve Apostles as a whole, and they, as a body of men entrusted with co-equal power, exercised their functions. They knew nothing of Peter as the prince of the Apostles; nay, rather, when occasion demanded, they sent Peter as well as John as their delegates. The choice of these two men, just as their previous activity, depended again upon spiritual grounds, upon their love, their zeal, their Christian experience, not upon any official privilege or position which they enjoyed above the other Apostles.

Surely in this view again the Acts of the Apostles may be regarded as a mirror of all Church history. The pretended supremacy of St. Peter above his brethren has been the ground on which the claim of Roman supremacy over all other Christian Churches has been urged. That claim has been backed up by forgeries like the False Decretals, where fictitious letters of Popes dating from the first century downwards have been used to support the papal assertions. But plain men need not go into abstruse questions of Church history, or into debates upon disputed texts. We have one undoubted Church history, admitted by all parties who profess and call themselves Christians. That history is the Acts of the Apostles, and when we examine it we can find nothing about St. Peter, his life or his actions, answering in the remotest degree to that imperial and absolute authority which the papacy claims in virtue of its alleged descent from that holy Apostle. The Acts knows of St. Peter sometimes as the leader and spokesman of the Apostles, at other times as their

delegate, but the Acts knows nothing and hints nothing of St. Peter as the ruler, the prince, the absolute, infallible guide of his fellow Apostles and of the whole Church.

Peter and John were the persons despatched as the apostolic delegates to complete the work begun by Philip. We can see spiritual reasons which may have led to this choice. Peter and John, with James his brother, had been specially favoured with Christ's personal communications, they had been admitted into His most intimate friendship, and therefore they were spiritually eminent in the work of Christ, and peculiarly fitted to do work like that which awaited them in Samaria,—pointing Christian men to the great truth, that eminence in Christ's Church and cause will evermore depend, not upon official position or hierarchical or ministerial authority, but upon spiritual qualifications and the vigour of the interior life. How wonderfully has the prophecy involved in the pre-eminence of Peter, James, and John been fulfilled. When we look back over the ages of Christian labour which have since elapsed, whose are the foremost names? Whose fame as Christian workers is the greatest? Not popes or princes, or bishops of great cities, but an Augustine, the bishop of an obscure African see; an Origen, a presbyter of Alexandria; a Thomas à Kempis whom no man knows; or presbyters like John Wesley, or George Herbert, or Fletcher of Madeley, or John Keble;—men like them, holy and humble of heart, obscure in station or in scenes of labour, they have lived much with God and they have gained highest places in the saintly army, because they were specially the friends of Jesus Christ. The world knew nothing of them, and the men of affairs and the children of time, whose thoughts

were upon rank, and place, and titles, knew nothing of them; and such men had their reward perhaps, they gained what they sought; but the despised ones of the past have had their reward as well, for their names have now become as ointment poured forth, whose sweet fragrance has filled the whole house of the Lord.

II. And now why were Peter and John sent to Samaria from Jerusalem? They were doubtless sent to inspect the work, and see whether the apostolic approval could be given to the step of evangelizing the Samaritans. They had to form a judgment upon it; for no matter how highly we may rate the inspiration of the Apostles, it is clear that they had to argue, debate, think, and balance one side against another just like other people. The inspiration they enjoyed did not save them the trouble of thinking and the consequent danger of disputation; it did not force them to adopt a view, else why the debates we read of concerning the baptism of Cornelius, or the binding character of circumcision? It is clear, from the simple fact that controversy and debate held a prominent place in the early Christian Church, that there was no belief in the existence of infallible guides, local and visible, whose autocratic decisions were final and irreversible, binding the whole Church. It was then believed that the guidance of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed through the channel of free discussion and interchange of opinion, guided and sanctified by prayer. Peter and John had to go down to Samaria and keenly scrutinize the work, so as to see whether it bore the marks of Divine approval, completing the work by the imposition of their hands and prayer for the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles duly discharged their mission, and by their ministry the converts received the gift of the Holy

Spirit, together with some or all of those external signs and manifestations which accompanied the original blessing on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. This portion of our narrative has been always regarded by the Church, whether in the East or the West, as its authority for the practice of the rite of confirmation. The assertion of the Church of England, in one of the collects appointed for use by the bishop in the Confirmation Service, may be taken as expressing on this point the opinion of the Churches—Roman, Greek, and Anglican. "Almighty and everliving God, who makest us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto Thy Divine Majesty; We make our humble supplications unto Thee for these Thy servants, upon whom (after the example of Thy holy Apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify them (by this sign) of Thy favour and gracious goodness towards them." Let us reflect for a little on these words. The reference to apostolic example in this collect is not, indeed, merely to this incident at Samaria. The example of St. Paul at Ephesus, as narrated in the nineteenth chapter, is also claimed as another case in point. There we find that St. Paul came to a place where he had previously laboured for a short time. He discovered in Ephesus some disciples who had received the imperfect and undeveloped form of teaching which John the Baptist had communicated. A sect had apparently been already formed to continue John's teaching, such as we still find perpetuated amid the wilds of distant Mesopotamia, in the shape of the semi-Christian society which there practises daily baptism as a portion of its religion.[1] St. Paul explains to them

[1] See about this curious sect of the Hemero-baptists Lightfoot's *Colossians*, pp. 402-407.

the richer and fuller teaching of Christ, commands them to be baptized after the Christian model, by one of his attendants, and then, like Peter and John, completes the baptismal act by the imposition of hands and prayer for the gift of the Spirit. These two apostolic incidents are not, however, the only scriptural grounds which can be alleged for the continued use of confirmation. It might be said that the practice of the Apostles was not sufficient to justify or authorize confirmation as a scriptural rite, unless it can be shown that the imposition of hands, after baptism and as its completion, passed into the ordinary usage of the early Church. Let me here make a brief digression. The New Testament cannot be used as a guide-book to the whole life and practice of the early Church, because it was merely a selection from the writings of the Apostles and of their companions. If we possessed everything that the Apostles wrote, we doubtless should have information upon many points of apostolic doctrine and ritual concerning which we now can only guess, some of which would doubtless very much surprise us. Thus, to take an example, we should have been left without one single reference to the Holy Communion in all the writings of St. Paul, had not the disorders at Corinth led to grave abuses of that sacrament, and thus caused St. Paul incidentally to mention the subject in the tenth and eleventh chapters of his first epistle to that Church.

Or to take another case. The *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* has been already referred to and described. It is manifestly a manual dealing with the Church of apostolic times, and there we find reference to customs which were practised in the Apostolic Church, to which no reference, or at least very slight reference,

is made in the Epistles or other books of the New Testament. The Apostles practised fasting as a preparation for important Church actions, as we learn from the account of the ordination of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. The *Teaching of the Apostles* shows us that this practice, derived from the Jews, was the rule before baptism (of this we read nothing in the New Testament), as well as before ordination (of this we do read something), and that not only by the persons to be baptized, but by the ministers of baptism as well.[1] It mentions Wednesday and Friday fasts as instituted in opposition to the Monday and Thursday fasts of the Jews; it shows us how the lovefeasts of the Primitive Church were celebrated, and sheds much light upon the Order of prophets and their activity, to which St. Paul barely alludes. If we could regain the numberless writings of the Apostles and other early Christians which have perished, we should doubtless possess information upon many other practices and customs of early Church life which would much surprise us. The New Testament cannot then be used as an exhaustive account of the Primitive Church; its silence is no conclusive argument against apostolic origin or sanction as regards any practice, any more than the Old Testament is to be regarded as an exhaustive history of the Jewish nation. And yet, though we speak thus, confirmation or laying on of hands upon the baptized as the completion of the initial

[1] The order for adult baptism in the Book of Common Prayer was drawn up by the divines of the Restoration. They must have been well skilled in Christian antiquity, for they lay down expressly the same rule as the *Teaching of the Apostles*. They order that notice shall be given of an adult's baptism a week at least beforehand, that the persons to be baptized may be duly exhorted to prepare themselves by prayer and fasting for that holy ordinance.

sacrament is not left without notice in the Epistles. The imposition of hands as the complement of baptism did not cease with the Apostles and was not tied to them alone, any more than did the use of water in the sacrament of baptism itself cease with the Apostles, as some of the Society of Friends have contended, or the imposition of hands in ordination terminate with apostolic times, as others have argued. This appears from two passages. St. Paul, in the twenty-second verse of the fifth chapter of 1 Timothy, when dealing with Timothy's conduct in the usual pastoral oversight of the Church, lays down, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." These words referred not to ordination, for St. Paul had passed from that subject and was treating of Timothy's ministerial conduct towards the ordinary members of his flock, directing how he was to care for their souls, reproving publicly the notorious transgressor, and putting him to open shame. We admit, indeed, at once that this notice of the imposition of hands may refer to another use of it which was practised in the early Church. St. Paul may be referring to the imposition of hands when a lapsed or excommunicated member was readmitted into the Church; or both uses of the ceremony, in confirmation as well as in absolution, may be included under the one reference. But in any case we have another distinct, though incidental, mention of this rite, and that at a time, in a manner, and in a book which clearly proves the practice to have passed into the general custom of the Church. Let us see how this is.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written by one of the second generation of Christians, one of the generation who could look back to and wonder at the miracles and gifts of the apostolic age. The writer of the Hebrews tells us himself that he was in this position;

for when speaking, in the opening of the second chapter, concerning the danger of neglecting the Gospel message, he describes it as a "great salvation; which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." So that it is evident that the Church of the Hebrews was the composition of a man who belonged to a time when the Church had passed out of the fluid state in which we find it in the earlier chapters of the Acts. It had passed into a condition when rites and ceremonies and Church government and ecclesiastical organisations had crystallised, and when men repeated with profoundest reverence the forms and ceremonies which had become associated with the names and persons of the earliest teachers of the faith; names and persons which now were surrounded with all that sacred charm and halo which distance, and above all else, death, lend to human memories. There is an interesting passage in Tertullian which shows how this feeling worked among the early Christians, making them anxious in divine worship to repeat most minutely and even absurdly the circumstances of the Church's earliest days. In Tertullian's works we have a treatise on Prayer, in which he expounds the nature of the Lord's Prayer, going through it petition by petition, proving conclusively that Tertullian and the Christians nearest the apostolic age knew nothing of that modern absurdity which asserts that the Lord's Prayer should not be used by Christians. He then proceeds to explain certain useful customs, and to reprove certain superstitious ceremonies practised by the Christians of his day. He approves and explains the

custom of praying with hands outstretched, because this is an imitation of our Lord, whose hands were outstretched upon the cross.[1] He disapproves of the practice of washing the hands before every prayer,

[1] There is no ceremony which proves more conclusively the identity between the ritual of apostolic ages and, say, of the year 200, than this custom of standing at public prayer with hands outstretched. St. Paul, writing to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 8), says, "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands," and then he prescribes rules for the women. This passage will not be understood in its full force till one grasps the notion of an early Christian at prayer, as described by Tertullian in the treatise on Prayer to which I have referred. Tertullian lays down, with other writers of the second century, that Christians should pray in public on the Lord's Day standing with the hands lifted up and the arms stretched out horizontally. On this point the practices of the East and West alike were identical, and had not changed one atom from St. Paul's to Tertullian's time. From the way some people speak one would think that the Christians of the second century were wild revolutionaries, who were only too anxious to change the ritual derived from apostolic days. Tertullian's works prove that they were, on the other hand, almost too slavish in their adherence to ancient customs. Human nature is the same in every age, and a moment's reflection will show us that whether in England, Scotland, or Ireland, the ritual of old-fashioned congregations of every denomination is the same to-day as in the seventeenth century. A few instances occur to me which illustrate this. Dean Hook, in a letter dated April 5th, 1838, tells us that the old Presbyterian way of administering the Holy Communion, carrying the elements to the communicants sitting in their pews, still existed in the parish church of Leeds. The custom had been introduced early in the seventeenth century, and never was discontinued, notwithstanding a plain rubric forbidding it. I have read that the same custom prevailed at St. Mary's in Oxford, when Newman became Vicar. Again, down to a few years ago, in the country parts of Ulster and Connaught, the separation between the sexes in public worship continued among the Methodists, in obedience to John Wesley's law made one hundred and twenty years before. It is two hundred years since Sternhold and Hopkins' version of the Psalms was authoritatively laid aside, and Tate and Brady substituted. Yet I have within the last ten years seen Prayer-books in use at Bolton Abbey in Yorkshire, with Sternhold and Hopkins attached to them. Surely the early Christians were at least as Conservative as their modern followers.

which Tertullian says was done in memory of our Lord's Passion, when water was used by Pilate to wash his hands, and designates as superstitious the custom of sitting down upon their couches or beds after they had prayed, in imitation of Hermas who wrote the *Shepherd*, of whom it was said, that after finishing his prayer, he sat down on his bed.[1] Now this last instance exactly illustrates what must have happened in the case of the second generation of Christians, to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was directed. Men at the end of the second century, when Tertullian lived, looked back to the Shepherd of Hermas with the same profound reverence as to the Apostles. They imitated, therefore, every action and ceremony practised by the Shepherd, whom they regarded as inspired, reading his writings with the same reverence as those of the Apostles.

Human nature is ever the same. The latest sect started in the present generation will be found acting on the same principles as the Christians of the apostolic age. The practices and ceremonial of their first founders become the model on which they shape themselves, and every departure from that model is bitterly resented. Human nature is governed universally by principles which are essentially conservative and traditional.[2] So

[1] See Tertullian on Prayer, in his Works, vol. i., pp. 188-92, as translated in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library.

[2] I was much struck the other day with a modern instance of this. The Plymouth Brethren boast themselves as the least traditional of sects. They are, however, just at present split all the world over into two divisions, the great subject of debate being the writings of a Mr. Raven. He has ventured upon some perilous speculations concerning the nature of Christ's person. I have seen a formal indictment drawn out by his opponents, in which his opinions are contrasted with statements in the writings of their founder, the late J. N. Darby, which are evidently the final authority and standard of appeal for them.

it must have been with the immediate followers of the Apostles; they conformed themselves as exactly as they could to everything—rite, ceremony, form of words—which the Apostles delivered or practised. And the Apostles certainly delivered precepts and laid down rules on various liturgical questions, of which we have now no written record. St. Paul expressly refers to traditions and customs which he had delivered or intended to deliver, some of which we know, others of which we know not.[1] Now wherefore have we made this long excursion into the dim regions of primitive antiquity? Simply to show that it is *à priori* likely that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and men like him of the second and third generation of Christians, would have followed the example of the Apostles, and practised imposition of hands together with prayer for the gift of the Spirit in the case of those baptized into Christ, merely because the Apostles had beforetime practised it. And then, when we come to the actual study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and read the sixth chapter, we find our anticipations fulfilled. In the first two verses of that chapter the writer lays down the first principles of Christ, the foundation doctrines of the Christian system, which he takes for granted as known and acknowledged by every one; they are, repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. Here the imposition of hands can-

[1] Thus in 1 Cor. xi. 2 St. Paul says, "Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you," and then goes on to discuss the question of veiling of women, showing the character of the traditions thus delivered. With this verse may be compared similar references in 1 Cor. vii. 17, 2 Thess. ii. 15 and iii. 9.

not refer to ordination, because, as all the other points are matters of personal religion and individual practice, not of ecclesiastical organisation, so we must restrict the imposition of hands referred to as a principle of the Christian religion, to some imposition of hands needful for every Christian, not for the few merely who should be admitted to the work of the ministry. While, again, its close connection with baptism clearly points to the imposition of hands in Confirmation, which the Apostles practised and the primitive Christians adopted from their example. And then, when we pass to ecclesiastical antiquity and study the works of Tertullian, the earliest writer who enters into the details of the practices and ritual established in the Churches, we find imposition of hands connected with baptism exactly as stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and viewed as the channel by which the gift of the Holy Ghost is conveyed,[1] not in the shape of miraculous gifts, but in all that edifying, consoling, and sanctifying power which every individual needs, and in virtue of which the New Testament writers, in common with Tertullian, call baptized men temples of the Holy Ghost and partakers of the Holy Ghost.[2]

[1] See Tertullian on Baptism, chap. vi., where he says, "Not that in the waters we obtain the Holy Spirit, but in the water, under the influence of the angel, we are cleansed, and thus prepared for the Holy Spirit." And again, in chap. viii. he describes the course followed after baptism thus: "In the next place the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through the words of benediction." To pass from Tertullian to a very different witness, we may note that Calvin in his commentary on Heb. vi. 2 says, "This one place abundantly testifies that the origin of this ceremony (imposition of hands on the baptized) came from the Apostles." He differs from Tertullian, however. Calvin does not view it so much as a channel of Divine grace as a rite for profession of faith and solemn prayer, and as such would have confirmation continued as a necessary complement of infant baptism.

[2] Compare 1 Cor. vi. 19 with Heb. vi. 4, 5.

CHAPTER XIX.

ST. PETER AND SIMON MAGUS.

"Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."—ACTS viii. 18, 19.

WE have in the last exposition endeavoured to explain the origin of the rite of Confirmation and to connect its development in the second century with the first notice of its rise in germ and principle at Samaria. There have been from time to time modifications and changes in the ordinance. The Church has availed itself of the power she necessarily possesses to insist upon different aspects of Confirmation at different periods. The Church of England at the Reformation brought out into prominence the human side of Confirmation as we may call it, which views the rite as a renewal and strengthening of the baptismal vows of renunciation, faith, and obedience, which had fallen too much out of sight, while still insisting on the Divine side as well, which regards Confirmation as a method of Divine action, a channel of Divine grace, strengthening and blessing the soul. Yet no one can imagine that the Reformers invented a new ordinance because they insisted on a forgotten and latent side of the old rite. So it was during the second century and in Tertullian's time. The exigencies of

the Christian Church of that age had led to certain modifications of apostolic customs, but the central idea of solemn imposition of hands continued, and was regarded as of apostolic appointment. If we descend a little lower this is plain enough. St. Cyprian, the contemporary and disciple of Tertullian, expressly attributes the institution of the rite to the action of the Apostles at Samaria, a view which is subsequently attested by those great lights of the ancient Church, St. Jerome and St. Augustine.[1] As my object is, however, not to write a treatise on Confirmation, but to trace the evolution and development of apostolic customs and ritual, and to show how they were connected with the Church of the second century, I restrain myself to Tertullian alone.

I cannot see how this argument is to be evaded without rejecting the testimony of Tertullian and denying what we may call the historic memory and continuity of the Church at the close of the second century. Upon the testimony of Tertullian we very largely depend for our proof of the canonicity of the books of the New Testament. Men when impugning or rejecting

[1] The evidence from these writers will be found in a collected shape in Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xii., chap. iii., sec. vi. St. Augustine, in his Tract VI., on 1 St. John iii., expressly deals with the objection that because the Apostles imparted miraculous gifts by the imposition of hands, therefore their conduct forms no precedent for us. "In the first age the Holy Ghost fell on them that believed; and they spake with tongues which they had never learned, as the Spirit gave them utterance. These were signs proper for that time; for then it was necessary that the Holy Ghost should be thus demonstrated in all kinds of tongues, because the gospel was to run throughout the whole world in all sorts of languages. But this demonstration once made, it ceased." I have above called Cyprian the disciple of Tertullian, because we learn from St. Jerome that Cyprian when asking for the works of Tertullian always said, "Da Magistrum," "Give me the master."

Tertullian's witness on this or any similar question, should bear in mind what the results of their teaching may be; for surely if Tertullian's clear evidence avails not to prove the apostolic character of confirmation, it cannot be of much use to establish the still more important question of the canon of the New Testament or the authorship of the Gospels and Acts. We think, on the other hand, that Tertullian's references to this practice are naturally and easily explained by our theory that the Churches established by the Apostles followed their example. The first converts that were made after the Apostles had founded a Church were treated by the resident bishop and presbyters exactly as the Apostle had treated themselves. Timothy at Ephesus acted as he had seen St. Paul do. Timothy completed his converts' baptism by the imposition of hands, and then his successor followed the example of Timothy, and so confirmation received that universal acceptation which the writings of the Fathers disclose.

I. Let us now return to the consideration of the actual doings of Peter and John at Samaria, and the lessons we may draw from thence as touching the manner in which men should follow the example left by them at this crisis in Church history. The Apostles prayed for those that had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, and then they laid their hands upon them, and the baptized received the Holy Ghost. Prayer went before the imposition of hands, to show that there was nothing mechanical in their proceedings; that it was not by their own power or virtue that any blessing was granted, but that they were only instruments by whom the Lord worked. The Apostles always acted, taught, ordained, confirmed, in the profoundest confidence, the surest faith that God worked in them and

through them. St. Paul in his address to the elders of Miletus and Ephesus, whom he had himself ordained, spoke of their ordination, not as the work of man, but of the Holy Ghost. He pierced the veil of sense and saw, far away and behind the human instrument, the power of the Divine Agent who was the real Ordainer. "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops." And so again in his words to Timothy there was not a shadow of doubt when he bid him "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of hands:" a gift which was doubtless no miraculous power, but the purely spiritual endowment, needful now as in ancient times for the edification and strengthening of human souls. As it was in ancient times so is it still, the Church of Christ unites prayer with imposition of hands. She cannot recognise any difference in the methods of God's dealing with human souls in apostolic times and in modern ages. Human wants are the same, human nature is the same, the promises of God and the ministry of God are the same; and therefore as in Samaria, so in England, the work of baptism is completed when further prayer is offered, and the imposition of hands by the chief ministers of God's Church signifies her holy confidence in the abiding presence and work of the Divine Spirit.

We desire to insist upon this devotional side of confirmation, because the rite of confirmation has been too often treated as a mere mechanical function, just indeed as men in times of spiritual deadness and torpor come to regard all spiritual functions in a purely mechanical aspect. The New Testament brought to light a religion of the spirit; but human nature ever tends to become formal in its religion, and therefore has persistently

striven, and still persistently strives, to turn every external function and office in a mechanical direction. The Apostles prayed and then laid their hands upon the Samaritan converts, and we may be sure that these prayers were intense personal supplications, dealing directly with the hearts and consciences of the individuals. Confirmation, united with fervent prayer, public and private, with searching addresses directed to the conscience, with personal dealing as regards individual hearts, followed by public imposition of hands,—surely every one must acknowledge that such a solemnisation and sanctification of the great crisis when boyhood and girlhood pass into manhood and womanhood must have very blessed effects. Experience has, indeed, proved the wisdom of the ancient Church concerning this ordinance. Confirmation has not developed itself exactly in the East as we know it in the West. In the Eastern Church, as amongst the Lutherans of Germany, confirmation can be administered by a presbyter as well as by a bishop, to whom alone the Western Church limits the function. But whether in the East or West, confirmation is regarded as the transition step connecting baptism and the Eucharist. Christian bodies which have rejected the ancient customs have felt themselves obliged to adopt a similar method. Preparation for first Communion has taken the place of confirmation. There has been the same earnest dealing with conscience, the same fuller instruction in Christian truth and life, and the one thing lacking has been that following of the apostolic example in solemn imposition of hands, which would have thrown back the young mind to the days of the Church's earliest life, and helped it to realize something of the continuity of the Church's work and existence.

Many, as I know, ministering in societies where confirmation after the ancient model has been rejected, have bitterly lamented its disuse as depriving them of a solemn appointed time when they should have been brought into closer contact with the lives, the feelings, and the consciences of the lambs of Christ's flock. I am bound to confess, at the same time, that no one is more alive than I am to the many defects and shortcomings in the modes and fashions in which confirmation is sometimes viewed and conferred. The mere mechanical view of it is far too prevalent. Careful and prayerful preparation, systematic instruction in the field of Christian doctrine, is still in many cases far too little thought of. Confirmation offers a splendid opportunity when an earnest pastor may open out to young minds eager to receive truth, a fuller acquaintance with the deep things of God. Alas! how miserably such earnest young minds are sometimes met. It is stated that it was by injudicious treatment at such a time that the ardent, enthusiastic mind of the late Charles Bradlaugh was alienated from Christian truth. Intelligent sympathy is what the young desire and crave for at such seasons. Then it is that the man who has kept his mind fresh and active by wide and generous study finds the due reward of his labours. He does not attempt to meet doubts and difficulties by foolish denunciations. He knows that such doubts are in the air; that they meet the young in the newspapers, magazines, conversations of the day. He proves by his instructions that he knows of them and enters into them. He encourages frank discussion of them, and thus often proves himself at a very trying time the most helpful and consoling friend to the young and troubled spirit.

Confirmation, if viewed merely from the purely human side, and if we say nothing at all about a Divine blessing, offers a magnificent opportunity for a wise pastor of souls. He will, indeed, treat different ranks in different ways. A class of ploughboys or of village lads and girls need plain speaking on the great facts of life and of the Gospel, while the higher and more educated or sharper inhabitants of cities and towns require teaching which will embrace the problems of modern thought, as well as the foundation truths of morals. A perfunctory repetition of the Church Catechism, as in some parishes, or a brief study of a portion of the Greek Testament, as in some of our public schools, is a miserable substitute for that careful preparation, embracing devotional as well as intellectual preparation, which such an important function demands.[1] Then, again, the method in which confirmation is administered calls for improvement and change. The confirmation of immense crowds at central churches tends to confirm the mere mechanical idea about confirmation. Parochial confirmations, a confirmation of the young of each congregation in presence of the congregation itself, that is the standard at which we should aim. The Church of Rome can give us wise suggestions on this point. Some time ago I noticed an account of a Roman Catholic confirmation in the west of Ireland. It was held in a town of twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants. The bishop took a week for the confirmations in that town, examining all the children before-

[1] It seems to me a great pity that, owing to the modern public school system, the confirmation of boys of the upper and middle classes is almost entirely passing from their own home pastors to the masters of public schools, and not always with happy results. This tends to increase the hard mechanical view of confirmation against which I protest.

hand, bringing them thus into direct contact with himself as their supreme pastor, and assuring himself of the sufficiency of their preparation.

II. We have now noted some of the defects connected with modern confirmations; but the conduct of Simon Magus and this incident at Samaria remind us that defects and shortcomings must ever exist, as they existed in the Church of the Apostles. We note here Simon's offer and St. Peter's address. Simon Magus had believed, had been baptized, and doubtless had also been confirmed by the Apostles. In the case of some of the Samaritans, at least, the presence of the Holy Ghost must have been proved by visible or audible signs, for we are told that when Simon *saw* that through the imposition of apostolic hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money to enable him to do the same. His offer sufficiently explains the nature of his faith. He was convinced intellectually of the truth of certain external facts which he had seen. He knew nothing of spiritual want, or the power of sin, or a desire for interior peace and sanctity. He looked upon the Apostles as cleverer jugglers and sorcerers than himself, accessible to precisely the same motives, and therefore he offered them money if they would endow him with the knowledge and power they possessed and exercised. The Acts of the Apostles, as a mirror of all Church history, thus selects for our instruction an event which sounds a warning needful for every age.

Simon Magus had a mere intellectual knowledge of the truth, and that mere intellectual knowledge, apart from a moral and spiritual conception of it, plunged him into a deeper fall than otherwise might have been the case. Simon Magus was a typical example of this, and successive centuries have offered many notable

imitations. Julian the Apostate was brought up as a Christian clergyman, and used to read the lessons in Church, whence he would adjourn to join in the polluting rites of paganism; and so it has been from age to age, till in our own time some of the bitterest opponents of Christianity, at home or in the mission field, have been those who, like Simon, knew of the Gospel facts but had tasted nothing of the Gospel life.

We may derive from this incident guidance in a difficult controversy which has of late made much stir. Men have asserted that Christian missionaries were giving far too much time to mere intellectual training of pagans, instead of devoting themselves to evangelistic work. A writer who has never visited the mission-field has no right to pass judgment on such a matter. But cannot we read in this passage a warning against such a tendency? Intellectual conviction does not mean spiritual conversion. Of course we know that no human effort can ensure spiritual blessings, but if intellectual training of clever pagan youths, and not spiritual work, be regarded as the great object of Christian missions; if the Holy Ghost be not honoured by being made the supreme lord of heart and life and work, we cannot expect any blessed results to follow. We read very little in the earliest ages of the Church about educational missions. The work of education was not despised. The school of Alexandria from the earliest times held high the standard of Christian scholarship. But that school, though open, like all ancient academies, to every class, was primarily intended for the training of Christian youth, placing before all other studies the Divine science of theology.

The offer, again, of Simon Magus has given a name to a sin which has been found prevalent in

every age and in every country. The sin has, indeed, taken different shapes. Simony, throughout the Middle Ages, was a common vice against which some of the more devout popes strove long and vigorously. In England and according to English law simony means still the purchase of spiritual office or spiritual functions. It would be simoniacal for a bishop to receive money for conferring holy orders or for appointment to a living. It would be an act of simony for a man to offer or give money to attain either holy orders or a living. How then, it may be said, does the unhallowed traffic in Church livings continue to flourish? Simply because, through colourable evasions, men bring themselves to break the spirit of the law while they keep within its strict letter. Simony, however, is a much more extensive and far-reaching corruption than the purchase of ecclesiastical benefices. Simony can take subtler shapes and can adapt itself to conditions very different from those which prevail under an established Church. Every one recognises, in word at least, the scandalous character of money traffic in Church offices. Even those who really practise it, hide from themselves, by some device or excuse, the character of their action. But the simoniacal spirit, the essence of Simon's sin, is found in many quarters which are never suspected. What is that essence? Simon desired to obtain spiritual power and office, not in the Divine method, but in low earthly ways. Money was his way because it was the one thing he valued and had to offer; but surely there are many other ways in which men may unlawfully seek for spiritual office and influence in the Church of Christ. Many a man who would never dream of offering money in order to obtain a high place in the Church, or would have been horrified at the very

suggestion, has yet resorted to other methods just as effective and just as wrong. Men have sought high position by political methods. They have given their support to a political party, and have sold their talents to uphold a cause, hoping thereby to gain their ends. They may not have given gold which comes from the mine to gain spiritual position, but they have all the same given a mere human consideration, and sought by its help to obtain spiritual power; or they preach and speak and vote in Church synods and assemblies with an eye to elections to high place and dignity. An established Church, with its legally-secured properties and prizes, may open a way for the exercise of simony in its grosser forms. But a free Church, with its popular assemblies, opens the way for a subtler temptation, leading men to shape their actions, to suppress their convictions, to order their votes and speeches, not as their secret conscience would direct them, but as human nature and earthly considerations would tell them was best for their future prospects. How many a speech is spoken, how many a sermon is preached, how many a vote is given, not as the Holy Ghost directs, but under the influence of that unhallowed spirit of sheer worldliness which led Simon to offer money that he too might be enabled to exercise the power which the unworldly Apostles possessed. The spirit of simony may just as really lead a man to give a vote or to abstain from voting, to make a speech or keep silence, as it led men in a coarser and plainer age to give bribes for the attainment of precisely the same ends. In this respect, again, as warning against the intrusion of low earthly motives in the concerns of the Divine society, the Acts of the Apostles proves itself a mirror of universal Church history.

Then we have the address of St. Peter to this notorious sinner. It is very plain-spoken. The Apostle had been himself a great sinner, but he had not been harshly or roughly dealt with, because he had become a great penitent. St. Peter was most sympathetic, and could never have spoken so sharply as he did to Simon Magus had he not perceived with quick spiritual insight the inborn baseness and hollowness of the man's character. Still he does not cut him off from hope. He speaks plainly, as Christ's ministers should ever do when occasion requires. Simon Magus was a man of great influence in Samaria, but there was no "fear of man which bringeth a snare" about the Apostles, and so St. Peter fearlessly tells Simon his true position. "He was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." He indicates to him, however, the steps which, whether then or now, a person in that position should take if he desires to escape from the due reward of his deeds. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness." Repentance, then, is the first step which a man whose heart is not right in God's sight has to take. There was no hesitation, as we have already remarked when speaking of St. Peter's preaching at Jerusalem, about pressing upon men the duty of hearty, sincere repentance, embracing sorrow for sin and genuine amendment of life. Then having exhorted to repentance, the Apostle proceeds, "And pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." Prayer is the next step. First comes repentance, then prayer, and then forgiveness. There was nothing in St. Peter's teaching which lends the least countenance to the modern error which teaches that an unconverted man should not pray, that his one duty is to believe, and, till he does so, that his prayer is unacceptable to God. Simon Magus was

as estranged from God as a human soul could well have been, yet St. Peter's word to him then, and his word to every sinner still, would be an exhortation to diligent prayer. "Pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart shall be forgiven thee." The exhortation of Peter was blessed, for the time, to the sinner. It awoke a temporary sense of sin, though it wrought no permanent change. It has left, however, an eternal blessing and a permanent direction to the Church of Christ. In his preaching on the day of Pentecost to the Jews of Jerusalem, he shows us how to deal with those who are not as yet partakers of the Christian covenant. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ," was his message to the devout Jews of Jerusalem; "Repent and pray" is his message to the sinner who has been brought, all unworthy, into the kingdom of light and grace, but knows nothing of it in heart and life. St. Peter valued the blessings of belief in Christ and admission by baptism into His kingdom, but he knew that these benefits only intensified a man's condemnation if not realized in heart and lived in practice. St. Peter's visit to Samaria in company with St. John has much to teach the Church on many other points, as we have pointed out, but no lesson which can be derived from it is so important as that which declares the true road for the returning sinner to follow, the value of repentance, the efficacy of heart-felt prayer, the supreme importance of a heart right in the sight of God.

CHAPTER XX.

EVANGELISTIC WORK IN THE PHILISTINES' LAND.

"But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem for to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah."—ACTS viii. 26-8.

"And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."—ACTS ix. 32.

I HAVE united these two incidents, the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch and the mission of St. Peter to the people of Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa, because they relate to the same district of country and they happened at the same period, the pause which ensued between the martyrdom of St. Stephen and the conversion of St. Paul. The writer of the Acts does not seem to have exactly followed chronological order in this part of his story. He had access to different authorities or to different diaries. He selected as best he could the details which he heard or read, and strove to weave them into a connected narrative. St. Luke, when gathering up the story of these earliest days of the Church's warfare, must have laboured under great difficulties which we now can scarcely realize. It was doubtless from St. Philip himself that our author learned the details of the eunuch's conversion and of St. Peter's labours. St. Luke and St. Paul tarried many days

with St. Philip at Cæsarea. Most probably St. Luke had then formed no intention of writing either his Gospel or his apostolic history at that period. He was urged on simply by that unconscious force which shapes our lives and leads us in a vague way to act in some special direction. A man born to be a poet will unconsciously display his tendency. A man born to be a historian will be found, even when he has formed no definite project, note-book in hand, jotting down the impressions of the passing hour or of his current studies. So probably was it with St. Luke. He could not help taking notes of conversations he heard, or making extracts from the documents he chanced to meet; and then when he came to write he had a mass of materials which it was at times hard to weave into one continuous story within the limits he had prescribed to himself. One great idea, indeed, to which we have often referred, seems to have guided the composition of the first portion of the apostolic history. St. Luke selected, under Divine guidance, certain representative facts and incidents embodying great principles, typical of future developments. This is the golden thread which runs through the whole of this book, and specially through the chapters concerning which we speak in this volume, binding together and uniting in one organic whole a series of independent narratives.

I. The two incidents which we now consider have several representative aspects. They may be taken as typical of evangelistic efforts and the qualifications for success in them. Philip the deacon is aggressive, many-sided, flexible, and capable of adapting himself to diverse temperaments, whether those of the Grecian Jews at Jerusalem, the Samaritans in central Palestine, or the Jewish proselytes from distant Africa. Peter

is older, narrower, cannot so easily accommodate himself to new circumstances. He confines himself, therefore, to quiet work amongst the Jews of Palestine who have been converted to Christ as the result of the four years' growth of the Church. "As Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda." This incident represents to us the power and strength gained for the cause of Christ by intellectual training and by wider culture. It is a lesson needed much in the great mission field. It has hitherto been too much the fashion to think that while the highest culture and training are required for the ministry at home, any half-educated teacher, provided he be in earnest, will suffice for the work of preaching to the heathen. This is a terrible mistake, and one which has seriously injured the progress of religion. It is at all times a dangerous thing to despise one's adversary, and we have fallen into the snare when we have despised systems like Buddhism and Hindooism, endeavouring to meet them with inferior weapons.[1] The ancient religions of the East are

[1] The primitive Church never made this mistake. The great missionaries who dealt with the heathen in the second century were profoundly skilled in philosophy, several of them being philosophers by profession. Aristides, whose long-lost *Apology* has just been recovered, Justin Martyr, and Tatian were Christian philosophers in the second century, and consecrated their powers to missionary labours. Pantænus, Clement, and Origen, profound scholars of Alexandria, took the greatest trouble to understand Greek paganism before they proceeded to refute it. I think that candidates in training for foreign missions might be taken with great advantage through a course of the second century apologists. Clement and Origen never poured indiscriminate abuse on the system they opposed; their teaching was no bald negative controversy; they always strove, like St. Paul at Athens, to ascertain what was good and true in their opponents' position, and to work from thence. See pp. 214, 215 above, where much the same line of thought has been insisted upon.

founded on a subtle philosophy, and should be met by men whose minds have received a wide and generous culture, which can distinguish between the chaff and the wheat, rejecting what is bad in them while sympathising with and accepting what is good. The notices of Philip and Stephen and their work, as contrasted with that of St. Peter, proclaim the value of education, travel, and thought in this the earlier section of the Acts, as the labours of St. Paul declare it in the days of Gentile conversion. The work of the Lord, whether among Jews or Gentiles, is done most effectually by those whose natural abilities and intellectual sympathies have been quickened and developed. A keen race like the Greeks of old or the Hindoos of the present, are only alienated from the very consideration of the faith when it is presented in a hard, narrow, intolerant, unsympathetic spirit. The angel chose wisely when he selected the Grecian Philip to bear the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, and left Peter to minister to Æneas, to Tabitha, and to Simon the tanner of Joppa; simple souls, for whom life glided smoothly along, troubled by no intellectual problems and haunted by no fearful doubts.

II. Again, we may remark that these incidents and the whole course of Church history at this precise moment show the importance of clear conceptions as to character, teaching, and objects. The Church at this time was vaguely conscious of a great mission, but it had not made up its mind as to the nature of that mission, because it had not realized its own true character, as glad tidings of great joy unto *all* nations. And the result was very natural: it formed no plans for the future, and was as yet hesitating and undecided in action. It was with the Church then as in our everyday experience of individuals. A man who does not

know himself, who has no conception of his own talents or powers, and has formed no idea as to his object or work in life, that man cannot be decided in action, he cannot bring all his powers into play, because he neither knows of their existence, nor where and how to use them. This is my explanation of the great difference manifest on the face of our history as between the Church and its life before and after the conversion of Cornelius. It is plain that there was a great difference in Church life and activity between these two periods. Whence did it arise? The admission of the Gentiles satisfied the unconscious cravings of the Church. She felt that at last her true mission and her real object were found, and, like a man of vigorous mind who at last discovers the work for which nature has destined him, she flung herself into it, and we read no longer of mere desultory efforts, but of unceasing, indefatigable, skilfully-directed labour; because the Church had at last been taught by God that her great task was to make all men know the riches hidden in Christ Jesus. We have in this fact a representative lesson very necessary for our time. Men are now very apt to mistake mistiness for profundity, and clearness of conception for shallowness of thought. This feeling intrudes itself into religion, and men do not take the trouble to form clear conceptions on any subject, and they lapse therefore into the very weakness which afflicted the Church prior to St. Peter's vision. The root of practical, vigorous action is directly assailed if men have no clear conceptions as to the nature, the value, and the supreme importance of the truth. If, for instance, a man cherishes the notion, now prevalent in some circles, that Mahometanism is the religion suited for the natives of Africa, how will he make sacrifices either of time,

of money, or of thought, to make the Gospel known to that great continent? I do not say that we should seek to have sharp and clear conceptions on all points. There is no man harder, more unsympathetic with the weak, more intolerant of the slightest difference, more truly foolish and short-sighted, than the man who has formed the clearest and sharpest conceptions upon the profoundest questions, and is ready to decide offhand where the subtlest and deepest thinkers have spoken hesitatingly. That man does not, in the language of John Locke, recognise the length of his own tether. He wishes to make himself the standard for everyone else, and infallibly brings discredit on the possession of clear views on any topics. There are vast tracts of thought upon which we must be content with doubt, hesitancy, and mistiness; but the man who wishes to be a vigorous, self-sacrificing servant of Jesus Christ must seek diligently for clear, broad, strong conceptions on such great questions as the value of the soul, the nature of God, the person of Jesus Christ, the work of the Spirit, and all the other truths which the Apostles' Creed sets forth as essentially bound up with these doctrines. Distinct and strong convictions alone on such points form for the soul the basis of a decided and fruitful Christian activity; as such decided convictions energised the whole life and character of the blessed apostle of love when writing, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one."

III. Now turning from such general considerations, we may compare the two incidents, St. Philip's activities and St. Peter's labours, in several aspects. *We notice a distinction in their guidance.* Greater honour is placed on Philip than upon Peter. An angel speaks to Philip, while St. Peter seems to have been left to

that ordinary guidance of the Spirit which is just as real as any external direction, such as that given by an angel, but yet does not impress the human mind or supersede its own action, as the external direction does. Dr. Goulburn, in an interesting work from which I have derived many important hints,[1] suggests that the external message of the angel directing Philip where to go may have been God's answer to the thoughts and doubts which were springing up in His servant's mind. The incident of Simon Magus may have disturbed St. Philip. He may have been led to doubt the propriety of his action in thus preaching to the Samaritans and admitting to baptism a race hitherto held accursed. He had dared to run counter to the common opinion of devout men, and one result had been that such a bad character as Simon Magus had crept into the sacred fold. The Lord who watches over His people and sees all their difficulties, comes therefore to his rescue, and by one of His ministering spirits conveys a message which assures His fainting servant of His approval and of His guidance. Such is Dr. Goulburn's explanation, and surely it is a most consoling one, of which every true servant of God has had his own experience. The Lord even still deals thus with His people. They make experiments for Him, as Philip did; engage in new enterprises and in fields of labour hitherto untried; they work for His honour and glory alone; and perhaps they see nothing for a time but disaster and failure. Then, when their hearts are cast down and their spirits are fainting because of the way,

[1] *The Acts of the Deacons*, p. 276. This work discusses Philip's dealings with the eunuch at very great length. The reader desirous of seeing the spiritual teaching of that incident fully drawn out should consult it.

the Lord mercifully sends them a message by some angelic hand or voice, which encourages and braces them for renewed exertion.

An external voice of an angel may, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, have directed St. Philip. But the text does not give us a hint as to the appearance or character of the messenger whom God used on this occasion. The Old and New Testament alike take broader views of Divine messengers, and of angelic appearances generally, than we do. A vision, a dream, a human agent, some natural circumstance or instrument, all these are in Holy Scripture or in contemporary literature styled God's angels or messengers. Men saw then more deeply than we do, recognised the hand of a superintending Providence where we behold only secondary agents, and in their filial confidence spoke of angels where we should only recognise some natural power. Let me quote an interesting illustration of this. Archbishop Trench, speaking, in his *Notes on the Miracles*, of the healing of the Impotent Man at Bethesda, and commenting on St. John v. 4, a verse which runs thus, "For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden," thus enunciates the principle which guided the ancient Christians, as well as the Jews, in this matter. He explains the origin of this verse, and the manner in which it crept into the text of the New Testament. "At first, probably, a marginal note, expressing the popular notion of the Jewish Christians concerning the origin of the healing power which from time to time the waters of Bethesda possessed, by degrees it assumed the shape in which we now have

it." The Archbishop then proceeds to speak of the Hebrew view of the world as justifying such expressions. "For the statement itself, there is nothing in it which need perplex or offend, or which might not find place in St. John. It rests upon that religious view of the world which in all nature sees something beyond and behind nature, which does not believe that it has discovered causes when, in fact, it has only traced the sequence of phenomena, and which everywhere recognises a going forth of the immediate power of God, invisible agencies of His, whether personal or otherwise, accomplishing His will."[1] The whole topic of angelic agencies is one that has been much confused for us by the popular notions about angels, notions which affect every one, no matter how they imagine themselves raised above the vulgar herd. When men speak or think of angelic appearances, they think of angels as they are depicted in sacred pictures. The conception of young men clad in long white and shining raiment, with beautiful wings dependent from their shoulders and folded by their sides, is an idea of the angels and angelic life derived from mediæval painters and sculptors, not from Holy Writ. The important point, however, for us to remember is that Philip here moved under external direction to the conversion of the eunuch. The same Spirit which sent His messenger to direct Philip, led Peter to move towards exactly the same south-western quarter of Palestine, where he was to remain working, meditating, praying, till the hour had come when the next great step should be taken and the Gentiles admitted as recognised members of the Church.

IV. This leads us to the next point. Philip and Peter

[1] The verse John v. 4 of the Authorised Version has now been relegated to the margin of the Revised Version.

were both guided, the one externally, the other internally; but whither? They were led by God into precisely the same south-western district of Palestine. Peter was guided, by one circumstance after another, first to Lydda and Sharon, and then to Joppa, where the Lord found him when he was required at the neighbouring Cæsarea to use the power of the keys and to open the door of faith to Cornelius and the Gentile world. Our narrative says nothing, in St. Peter's case, about providential guidance or heavenly direction, but cannot every devout faithful soul see here the plain proofs of it? The book of the Acts makes no attempt to improve the occasion, but surely a soul seeking for light and help will see, and that with comfort, the hand of God leading St. Peter all unconscious, and keeping him in readiness for the moment when he should be wanted. We are not told of any extraordinary intervention, and yet none the less the Lord guided him as really as He guided Philip, that his life might teach its own lessons, by which we should order our own. And has not every one who has devoutly and faithfully striven to follow Christ experienced many a dispensation exactly like St. Peter's? We have been led to places, or brought into company with individuals, whereby our future lives have been ever afterwards affected. The devout mind in looking back over the past will see how work and professions have been determined for us, how marriages have been arranged, how afflictions and losses have been made to work for good; so that at last, surveying, like Moses, life's journey from some Pisgah summit, when its course is well-nigh run, God's faithful servant is enabled to rejoice in Him because even in direct afflictions He has done all things well. A view of life like that is strictly warranted by

this passage, and such a view was, and still is, the sure and secret source of that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Nothing can happen amiss to him who has Almighty Love as his Lord and Master. St. Peter was led, by one circumstance after another, first to Lydda, which is still an existing village, then, farther, into the vale of Sharon, celebrated from earliest time for its fertility, and commemorated for its roses in the Song of Solomon (Cant. ii. 1, Isa. xxxiii. 9), till finally he settles down at Joppa, to wait for the further indications of God's will.

But how about Philip, to whom the Divine messenger had given a heavenly direction? What was the message so imparted? An angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert." Now we should here carefully remark the minute exactness of the Acts of the Apostles in this place, because it is only a specimen of the marvellous geographical and historical accuracy which distinguishes it all through, and is every year receiving fresh illustrations. Gaza has always been the gateway of Palestine. Invader after invader when passing from Egypt to Palestine has taken Gaza in his way. It is still the trade route to Egypt, along which the telegraph line runs. It was in the days of St. Philip the direct road for travellers like the Ethiopian eunuch, from Jerusalem to the Nile and the Red Sea. This man was seeking his home in Central Africa, which he could reach either by the Nile or by the sea, and was travelling therefore along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. The Acts, again, distinguishes one particular road. There were then, and there are still, two great roads leading from Jerusalem

to Gaza, one a more northern road, which ran through villages and cultivated land as it does to this day. The other was a desert road, through districts inhabited then as now by the wandering Arabs of the desert alone. Travellers have often remarked on the local accuracy of the angel's words when directing Philip to a road which would naturally be taken only by a man attended by a considerable body of servants able to ward off attack, and which was specially suitable, by its lonely character, for those prolonged conversations which must have passed between the eunuch and his teacher. Cannot we see, however, a still more suggestive and prophetic reason for the heavenly direction? In these early efforts of the Apostles and their subordinates we read nothing of missions towards the east. All their evangelistic operations lay, in later times, towards the north and north-west, Damascus, Antioch, Syria, and Asia Minor, while in these earlier days they evangelised Samaria, which was largely pagan, and then worked down towards Gaza and Cæsarea and the Philistine country, which were the strongholds of Gentile and European influence,—the Church indicated in St. Luke's selection of typical events; the Western, the European destiny working strong within. It already foretold, vaguely but still surely, that, in the grandest and profoundest sense,

"Westward the course of Empire takes its way;"

that the Gentile world, not the Jewish, was to furnish the most splendid triumphs to the soldiers of the Cross. Our Lord steadily restrained Himself within the strict bounds of the chosen people, because His teaching was for them alone. His Apostles already indicate their wider mission by pressing close upon towns and cities,

like Gaza and Cæsarea, which our Lord never visited, because they were the strongholds and chosen seats of paganism.[1] The providential government of God ordering the future of His Church and developing its destinies can thus be traced in the unconscious movements of the earliest Christian teachers. Their first missionary efforts in Palestine are typical of the great work of the Church in the conversion of Europe.

V. St. Philip was brought from Samaria, in the centre, to the Gaza road leading from Jerusalem to the coast; and why? Simply in order that he might preach the Gospel to one solitary man, the eunuch who was treasurer to Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. Here again we have another of those

[1] See Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 263, where this thought is further worked out. It is curious that notwithstanding the preaching of St. Philip and St. Peter in its neighbourhood, Gaza remained true to paganism longer than any other city of Palestine. The old Philistine opposition to Israel seems to have perpetuated itself in a pagan opposition to Christianity. Even in the fifth century, when St. Jerome boasted that Bethlehem was so completely Christian that the very ploughmen sang psalms and hymns as they laboured, Gaza still remained devoted to idol-worship. The inhabitants of Gaza, in union with those of Askelon, even rose in rebellion in defence of paganism towards the end of the fourth century (see Neander's *Church History*, iii., 105, Bohn's ed.). An interesting illustration of its obstinate paganism has come to light of late years. There were in Gaza eight public temples of idols, including those of the Sun, Venus, Apollo, Proserpine, Hecate, Fortune, and Marnas, dedicated to the Cretan Jupiter, believed by the people to be more glorious than any other temple in the world. All these temples were destroyed by the influence of the Empress Eudoxia, about A.D. 400; the words of the edict which overthrew the temples of Gaza can be read in the Theodosian Code, book xvi., title x., law 16. The statue of Marnas was then hidden by the pagans in the sand outside the city, where it was discovered in 1880. It is now figured and described in the *Survey of Western Palestine*, Memoirs, vol. iii., p. 254. It is especially interesting to us Christians, as being a statue which was almost certainly seen by St. Philip. See Selden, *De Dis Syris*, p. 215, and Murray's *Handbook for Palestine*, pp. 271-73.

representative facts which are set before us in the earlier portion of this book. On the day of Pentecost, Jews from all parts of the Roman Empire, and from the countries bordering upon the east of that Empire, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and Arabians, came in contact with Christianity. Philip had ministered in Samaria to another branch of the circumcision, but Africa, outside the Empire at least, had as yet no representative among the firstfruits of the cross. But now the prophecy of the sixty-eighth Psalm was to be fulfilled, and "Ethiopia was to stretch out her hands unto God." We have the assurance of St. Paul himself that the sixty-eighth Psalm was a prophecy of the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. In Eph. iv. 8 he writes, quoting from the eighteenth verse, "Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." And then he proceeds to enumerate the various offices of the apostolic ministry, with their blessed tidings of peace and salvation, as the gifts of the Spirit which God had bestowed through the ascension of Jesus Christ. And now, in order that no part of the known world might want its Jewish representative, we have the conversion of this eunuch, who, as coming from Ethiopia, was regarded in those times as intimately associated with India.

Let us see, moreover, what we are told concerning this typical African convert. He was an Ethiopian by birth, though he may have been of Jewish descent, or perhaps more probably a proselyte, and thus an evidence of Jewish zeal for Jehovah. He was an eunuch, and treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. He was like Daniel and the three Hebrew children in the court of the Chaldæan monarch. He had utilised his Jewish genius

and power of adaptation so well that he had risen to high position. The African queen may have learned, too, as Darius did, to trust his Jewish faith and depend upon a man whose conduct was regulated by Divine law and principle. This power of the Jewish race leading them to high place amid foreign nations and in alien courts has been manifested in their history from the earliest times. Moses, Mordecai and Esther, the Jews in Babylon, were types and prophecies of the greatness which has awaited their descendants scattered among the Gentiles in our own time. This eunuch was treasurer of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians. Here again we find another illustration of the historical and geographical accuracy of the Acts of the Apostles. We learn from several contemporary geographers that the kingdom of Meroë in Central Africa was ruled for centuries by a line of female sovereigns whose common title was Candace, as Pharaoh was that of the Egyptian monarchs.[1] There were, as we have already pointed out, large Jewish colonies in the neighbourhood of Southern Arabia and all along the coast of the Red Sea. It was very natural, then, that Candace should have obtained the assistance of a clever Jew from one of these settlements. A question has been raised, indeed, whether the eunuch was a Jew at all, and some have regarded him as the first Gentile convert. The Acts of the Apostles, however, seems clear enough on this point. Cornelius is plainly put forward as the typical case which decided the question of the admission of the Gentiles to the benefits of the covenant of grace. Our history gives not the faintest hint that any such question was even distantly involved in the conversion and baptism of

[1] See the article "Meroë" in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, for a long account of the land whence the eunuch came.

the Ethiopian. Nay, rather by telling us that he had come to Jerusalem for the purpose of worshipping God, it indicates that he felt himself bound, as far as he could, to discharge the duty of visiting the Holy City and offering personal worship there once at least in his lifetime. Then, too, we are told of his employment when Philip found him. "He was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet." His attention may have been called to this portion of Holy Scripture during his visit to the temple, where he may have come in contact with the Apostles or with some other adherents of the early Church. At any rate he was employing his time in devout pursuits, he was making a diligent use of the means of grace so far as he knew them; and then God in the course of His providence opened out fresh channels of light and blessing, according to that pregnant saying of our Lord, "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine." The soul that is in spiritual perplexity or darkness need not and ought not to content itself with apathy, despair, or idleness. Difficulties will assault us on every side so long as we remain here below. We cannot escape from them because our minds are finite and limited. And some are ready to make these difficulties an excuse for postponing or neglecting all thoughts concerning religion. But quite apart from the difficulties of religion, there are abundant subjects on which God gives us the fullest and plainest light. Let it be ours, like the Ethiopian eunuch, to practise God's will so far as He reveals it, and then, in His own good time, fuller revelations will be granted, and we too shall experience, as this Ethiopian did, the faithfulness of His own promise, "Unto the righteous there ariseth up light in the darkness." The eunuch read the prophet Esaias as

he travelled, according to the maxim of the rabbis that "one who is on a journey and without a companion should employ his thoughts on the study of the law." He was reading the Scriptures aloud, too, after the manner of Orientals; and thus seeking diligently to know the Divine will, God vouchsafed to him by the ministry of St. Philip that fuller light which he still grants, in some way or other, to every one who diligently follows Him.

And then we have set forth the results of the eunuch's communion with the heaven-sent messenger. There was no miracle wrought to work conviction. St. Philip simply displayed that spiritual power which every faithful servant of Christ may gain in some degree. He opened the Scriptures and taught the saving doctrine of Christ so effectually that the soul of the eunuch, naturally devout and craving for the deeper life of God, recognised the truth of the revelation. Christianity was for the Ethiopian its own best evidence, because he felt that it answered to the wants and yearnings of his spirit. We are not told what the character of St. Philip's discourse was. But we are informed what the great central subject of his discourse was. It was Jesus. This topic was no narrow one. We can gather from other passages in the Acts what was the substance of the teaching bestowed by the missionaries of the Cross upon those converted by them.[1] He must have set

[1] Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* with Trypho the Jew was written about a hundred years after the eunuch's conversion. It is a good specimen of the methods adopted by the early Church in dealing with the Jews. St. Philip's teaching was doubtless of much the same kind. Justin upheld the application to Christ and its fulfilment in Him alone of the fifty-third of Isaiah, repeatedly quoting large portions of it, in the *Dialogue*, as, for instance, in chap. xiii. The apology of St. Stephen furnished the model upon which all subsequent missionaries to the

forth the historic facts which are included in the Apostles' Creed, the incarnation, the miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the institution of the sacrament of baptism as the means of entering into the Church. This we conclude from the eunuch's question to Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Assuredly Philip must have taught him the appointment of baptism by Christ; else what would have led the eunuch to propound such a request? Baptism having been granted in response to this request, the eunuch proceeded on his homeward journey, rejoicing in that felt sense of peace and joy and spiritual satisfaction which true religion imparts; while Philip is removed to another field of labour, where God has other work for him to do. He evangelised all through the Philistine country, preaching in all the cities till he came to Cæsarea, where in later years he was to do a work of permanent benefit for the whole Church, by affording St. Luke the information needful for the composition of the Acts of the Apostles.[1]

Jews framed their arguments. They all dealt largely with the transitory and typical character of the Levitical law. The apologies addressed to the Gentiles were quite different, as was natural. They dealt with the true nature of God, the conceptions men ought to form of Him, and the immoralities of the pagan deities. The newly-discovered *Apology* of Aristides, which I have described in the preface, dating from about 124 A.D., set a fashion which we find reproduced in Justin Martyr, Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks*, and in Tertullian's Apology and Address, *Ad Nationes*. The moral proofs of Christianity and its adaptation to the soul's wants are their leading topics. I have treated more of this point in the preface.

[1] The eunuch's name, according to Ethiopian tradition, was Indich or Indicus. He is believed by the Abyssinians to have converted Queen Candace, and then to have departed into India, where he taught in Ceylon. See Ludolf's *History of Ethiopia*, book iii., chaps. i. and ii.; and Bzovius' continuation of Baronius' *Annals*, A.D. 1524, where there is a long correspondence between the pope and the king

VI. Let us in conclusion note one other point. Our readers will have noticed that we have said nothing concerning the reply of Philip to the eunuch's question, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" The Authorized Version then inserts ver. 37, which runs thus: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." While if we take up the Revised Version we shall find that the Revisers have quite omitted this verse in the text, placing it in the margin, with a note stating that some ancient authorities insert it wholly or in part. This verse is now given up by all critics as an integral part of the original text, and yet it is a very ancient interpolation, being found in quotations from the Acts as far back as the second century. Probably its insertion came about somehow thus, much the same as in the case of John v. 4, to which we have already referred in this lecture. It was originally written upon the margin of a manuscript by some diligent student of this primitive history. Manuscripts were not copied in the manner we usually think. A scribe did not place a manuscript before him and then slowly transcribe it, but a single reader recited the original in a scriptorium or copying-room, while a number of writers rapidly followed his words. Hence a marginal note on a single manuscript might easily be incorporated in a number of copies, finding

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of Abyssinia in that year. The Abyssinians retain to this day a great many Jewish customs mixed with their Christianity. The Abyssinian tradition is incorrect, however. Modern Abyssinia is not the same as the ancient Meroë. The conversion of Abyssinia is due to the labours of a shipwrecked merchant in the time of St. Athanasius, and derived its faith from Egypt. The Coptic Church retains still many Jewish rites. See "Ethiopian Church" in *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol., ii.

a permanent place in a text upon which it was originally a mere pious reflection. Regarding this thirty-seventh verse, however, not as a portion of the text written by St. Luke, but as a second-century comment or note on the text, it shows us what the practice of the next age after the Apostles was. A profession of faith in Christ was made by the persons brought to baptism, and probably these words, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," was the local form of the baptismal creed wherever this note was written. Justin Martyr in his first *Apology*, chap. 61, intimates that such a profession of belief was an essential part of baptism, and this form, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," may have been the baptismal formula used in the ritual appointed for these occasions. Some persons indeed have thought that this short statement represented the creed of the Church of the second century. This raises a question which would require a much longer treatment than we can now bestow upon it. Caspari, an eminent Swedish theologian, has discussed this point at great length in a work which the English student will find reviewed and analysed in an article by Dr. Salmon published in the *Contemporary Review* for August 1878, where that learned writer comes to the conclusion that the substance of the Apostles' Creed dates back practically to the time of the Apostles. And now, as I am concluding this volume, an interesting confirmation of this view comes to us from an unexpected quarter. The *Apology* of Aristides was a defence of Christianity composed earlier even than those of Justin Martyr. Eusebius fixes the date of it to the year 124 or 125 A.D. It was at any rate one of the earliest Christian writings outside the Canon. It has been long lost to the Christian world. We knew nothing of its contents,

and were only aware of its former existence from the pages of the Church History of Eusebius. Two years ago it was found by Professor J. Rendel Harris, in Syriac, in the Convent of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai, and has just been published this month of May 1891 by the Cambridge University Press. It is a most interesting document of early Christian times, showing us how the first Apologists defended the faith and assailed the superstitions of paganism. Professor Harris has added notes to it which are of very great value. He points out the weak points in paganism which the first Christians used specially to assail. Aristides' *Apology* is of peculiar value in this aspect. It shows us how the first generation after the last Apostle was wont to deal with the false gods of Greece, Rome, and Egypt. It is, however, of special importance as setting forth from a new and unexpected source how the early Christians regarded their own faith, how they viewed their own Christianity, and in what formularies they embodied their belief. Professor Harris confirms Dr. Salmon's contention set forth in the article to which we have referred. In the time of Aristides the Christians of Athens, for Aristides was an Athenian philosopher who had accepted Christianity, were at one with those of Rome and with the followers of Catholic Christianity ever since. Aristides wrote according to Eusebius in 124 A.D., according to Professor Harris in the earliest days of Antoninus Pius, that is, before 140 A.D.; but still we can extract from his *Apology* all the statements of the Apostles' Creed in a formal shape. Thus Professor Harris restores the Creed as professed in the time of Aristides, that is, the generation after St. John, and sets it forth as follows:—

We believe in one God Almighty,
Maker of Heaven and Earth:
And in Jesus Christ His Son,
* * * * *
Born of the Virgin Mary.
* * * * *
He was pierced by the Jews,
He died and was buried:
The third day He rose again:
He ascended into Heaven.
* * * * *
He is about to come to judge.[1]
* * * * *

This *Apology* of Aristides is a most valuable contribution to Christian evidence, and raises high hopes as to what we may yet recover when the treasures of the East are explored. The *Diatessaron* of Tatian was a wondrous find, but the recovery of the long-lost *Apology* of Aristides endows us with a still more ancient document, bringing us back close upon the very days of the Apostles. As this discovery has only been published when these pages are finally passing through the press, I must reserve a farther notice of it for the preface to this volume.

[1] *Texts and Studies*, edited by J. A. Robinson, M.A. (Cambridge: University Press, 1891). There are several passages in Justin's *Dialogue* with Trypho which seem to be extracts from the primitive Creed. Thus in chap. xvii. we read the following words of Justin to Trypho: "For after you had crucified Him . . . when you knew that He had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven." In chap. xxxviii. Trypho objects to Justin: "For you utter many blasphemies, in that you seek to persuade us that this crucified Man was with Moses and Aaron, and spoke to them in the pillar of the cloud; that He became man, was crucified, and ascended up to heaven, and comes again to earth and ought to be worshipped." The date of the *Apology* of Aristides is fixed by the Armenian version of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius at 124 A.D. The *Paschal Chronicle* apparently assigns it to 134 A.D.

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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PREFACE.

THE following volume terminates my survey and exposition of the Acts of the Holy Apostles. I have fully explained in the body of this work the reasons which led me to discuss the latter portion of that book more briefly than its earlier chapters. I did this of set purpose. The latter chapters of Acts are occupied to a great extent with the work of St. Paul during a comparatively brief period, while the first twenty chapters cover a space of well-nigh thirty years. The riot in Jerusalem and a few speeches at Cæsarea occupy the larger portion of the later narrative, and deal very largely with circumstances in St. Paul's life, his conversion and mission to the Gentiles, of which the earlier portion of this volume treats at large. Upon these topics I had nothing fresh to say, and was therefore necessarily obliged to refer my readers to pages previously written. I do not think, however, that I have omitted any topic or passage suitable to the purposes of the *Expositor's Bible*. Some may desiderate longer notices of German theories concerning the origin and character of the Acts. But, then, an expositor's Bible is not intended to deal at length with

critical theories. Critical commentaries and works like Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament* take such subjects into consideration and discuss them fully, omitting all mere exposition. My duty is exposition, and the supply or indication of material suitable for expository purposes. If I had gone into the endless theories supplied by German ingenuity to explain what seems to us the simplest and plainest matters of fact demanding no explanation whatsoever, I am afraid there would have been little space left for exposition, and my readers would have been excessively few. Those who are interested in such discussions, which are simply endless, and will last as long as man's fancy and imagination continue to flourish, will find ample satisfaction in the eighteenth chapter of Dr. Salmon's *Introduction*. Perhaps I had better notice one point urged by him, as an illustration of the critical methods of English common sense. German critics have tried to make out that the Acts were written in the second century in order to establish a parallel between St. Peter and St. Paul when men wished to reconcile and unite in one common body the Pauline and Petrine parties. This is the view set forth at length by Zeller in his work on the Acts, vol. ii., p. 278, translated and published in the series printed some years ago under the auspices of the Theological Translation Fund. Dr. Salmon's reply seems to me conclusive, as contained in the following passage, *l.c.*, p. 336: "What I think proves conclusively that the making a parallel between Peter and Paul was not an idea present to the author's

mind, is the absence of the natural climax of such a parallel—the story of the martyrdom of both the Apostles. Very early tradition makes both Peter and Paul close their lives by martyrdom at Rome—the place where Rationalist critics generally believe the Acts to have been written. The stories told in tolerably ancient times in that Church which venerated with equal honour the memory of either apostle, represented both as joined in harmonious resistance to the impostures of Simon Magus. And though I believe these stories to be more modern than the latest period to which any one has ventured to assign the Acts, yet what an opportunity did that part of the story which is certainly ancient—that both Apostles came to Rome and died there for the faith (Clem. Rom., 5)—offer to any one desirous of blotting out the memory of all differences between the preaching of Peter and Paul, and of setting both on equal pedestals of honour! Just as the names of Ridley and Latimer have been united in the memory of the Church of England, and no count has been taken of their previous doctrinal differences, in the recollection of their first testimony for their common faith, so have the names of Peter and Paul been constantly bound together by the fact that the martyrdom of both has been commemorated on the same day. And if the object of the author of the Acts had been what has been supposed, it is scarcely credible that he could have missed so obvious an opportunity of bringing his book to its most worthy conclusion, by telling how the two servants of Christ—

all previous differences, if there had been any, reconciled and forgotten—joined in witnessing a good confession before the tyrant emperor, and encouraged each other to steadfastness in endurance to the end."

But though I have not dealt in any formal way with the critical theories urged concerning the Acts, I have taken every opportunity of pointing out the evidence for its early date and genuine character furnished by that particular line of historical exposition and illustration which I have adopted. It will be at once seen how much indebted I am in this department to the researches of modern scholars and travellers, especially to those of Professor Ramsay, whose long residence and extended travels in Asia Minor have given him special advantages over all other critics. I have made a diligent use of all his writings, so far as they had appeared up to the time of writing, and only regret that I was not able to use his paper on St. Paul's second journey, which appeared in the *Expositor* for October, after this work had been composed and printed. That article seems to me another admirable illustration of the critical methods used by our own home scholars as contrasted with those current abroad. Professor Ramsay does not set to work to spin criticisms out of his own imagination and elaborate theories out of his own inner consciousness even as a spider weaves its web; but he takes the Acts of the Apostles, compares it with the facts of Asia Minor, its scenery, roads, mountains, ruins, and then points out how exactly the text answers to the facts, showing that the author of

it wrote at the time alleged and must have been an eyewitness of the Apostles' doings. While again by a similar comparison in the case of the apocryphal acts of St. Paul and Thecla he demonstrates how easily a forger fell into grievous mistakes. I do not think a better illustration can be found of the difference between sound historical criticism and criticism based on mere imagination than this article by Professor Ramsay.

In conclusion I ought to explain that I systematically quote the Fathers whenever I can out of the translations published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, or in the Oxford Library of the Fathers. It would have been very easy for me to give this book a very learned look by adding the references in Greek or Latin, but I do not think I should have thus conduced much to its practical utility. The Fathers are now a collection of works much spoken of, but very little read, and the references in the original added to theological works are much more overlooked than consulted. It would conduce much to a sound knowledge of primitive antiquity were the works translated of all the Christian writers who flourished down to the triumph of Christianity. Authors who fill their pages with quotations in Latin and Greek which they do not translate forget one simple fact, that ten or twenty years in a country parish immersed in its endless details make the Latin and Greek of even good scholars somewhat rusty. And if so, what must be the case with those who are not good scholars, or not scholars at all, whether bad or good? I am often surprised noting

how much more exacting from their readers modern scholars are in this direction than our forefathers of two hundred years ago. Let any one, for instance, take up the works composed in English by Hammond or Thorndike discussing the subject of Episcopacy, and it will be found that in every case when they use a Latin, Greek, or Hebrew quotation while they give the original they always add the translation. Finally I have to acknowledge, what every page will show, the great assistance I have derived from the Lives of St. Paul written by Archdeacon Farrar, Mr. Lewin, and Messrs. Conybeare & Howson, and to express a hope that this volume together with the previous one will be found helpful by some as they strive to form a better and truer conception of the manner in which the Church of the living God was founded and built up amongst men.

GEORGE T. STOKES.

All Saints' Vicarage, Blackrock,
Nov. 4th, 1892.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRAINING OF SAUL THE RABBI.

"A young man named Saul."—ACTS vii. 58.

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day.' —ACTS xxii. 3.

THE appearance of St. Paul upon the stage of Christian history marks a period of new development and of more enlarged activity. The most casual reader of the Acts of the Apostles must see that a personality of vast power, force, individuality, has now entered the bounds of the Church, and that henceforth St. Paul, his teaching, methods, and actions, will throw all others into the shade. Modern German critics have seized upon this undoubted fact and made it the foundation on which they have built elaborate theories concerning St. Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. Some of them have made St. Paul the inventor of a new form of Christianity, more elaborate, artificial, and dogmatic than the simple religion of nature which, as they think, Jesus Christ taught. Others have seen in St. Paul the great rival and antagonist of St. Peter, and have seen in the Acts a deliberate attempt to reconcile the opposing factions of Peter and Paul by representing St. Paul's career as modelled upon that of Peter's.[1]

[1] See this portion of Baur's theory refuted in Dr. Salmon's *Intro-*

These theories are, we believe, utterly groundless; but they show at the same time what an important event in early Church history St. Paul's conversion was, and how necessary a thorough comprehension of his life and training if we wish to understand the genesis of our holy religion.

Who and whence, then, was this enthusiastic man who is first introduced to our notice in connexion with St. Stephen's martyrdom? What can we glean from Scripture and from secular history concerning his earlier career? I am not going to attempt to do what Conybeare and Howson thirty years ago, or Archdeacon Farrar in later times, have executed with a wealth of learning and a profuseness of imagination which I could not pretend to possess. Even did I possess them it would be impossible, for want of space, to write such a biography of St. Paul as these authors have given to the public. Let us, however, strive to gather up such details of St. Paul's early life and training as the New Testament, illustrated by history, sets before us. Perhaps we shall find that more is told us than strikes the ordinary superficial reader. His parentage is known

duction to the New Testament, ch. xviii., p. 335, 4th ed., where the writer admits a certain parallelism between the history of SS. Peter and Paul in the Acts, but denies that it was an invented parallelism. He remarks on the next page, "What I think proves decisively that the making a parallel between St. Peter and St. Paul was not an idea present to the author's mind is the absence of the natural climax of such a parallel—the story of the martyrdom of both the Apostles. . . . If the object of the author of the Acts had been what has been supposed, it is scarcely credible that he could have missed so obvious an opportunity of bringing his book to its most worthy conclusion, by telling how the two servants of Christ—all previous differences, if there had been any, reconciled and forgotten—joined in witnessing a good confession before the tyrant emperor, and encouraged each other in steadfastness in endurance to the end."

to us from St. Paul's own statement. His father and mother were Jews of the Dispersion, as the Jews scattered abroad amongst the Gentiles were usually called; they were residents at Tarsus in Cilicia, and by profession belonged to the Pharisees who then formed the more spiritual and earnest religious section of the Jewish people. We learn this from three passages. In his defence before the Council, recorded in Acts xxiii. 6, he tells us that he was "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees." There was no division in religious feeling between the parents. His home life and his earliest years knew nothing of religious jars and strife. Husband and wife were joined not only in the external bonds of marriage, but in the profounder union still of spiritual sentiment and hope, a memory which may have inspired a deeper meaning begotten of personal experience in the warning delivered to the Corinthians, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." Of the history of his parents and ancestors we know practically nothing more for certain, but we can glean a little from other notices. St. Paul tells us that he belonged to a special division among the Jews, of which we have spoken a good deal in the former volume when dealing with St. Stephen. The Jews at this period were divided into Hebrews and Hellenists: that is, Hebrews who by preference and in their ordinary practice spoke the Hebrew tongue, and Hellenists who spoke Greek and adopted Greek civilisation and customs. St. Paul tells us in Philippians iii. 5 that he was "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews," a statement which he substantially repeats in 2 Corinthians xi. 22. Now it was almost an impossibility for a Jew of the Dispersion to belong to the Hebrews. His lot was cast in a foreign land, his

business mixed him up with the surrounding pagans, so that the use of the Greek language was an absolute necessity; while the universal practice of his fellow-countrymen in conforming themselves to Greek customs, Greek philosophy, and Greek civilisation rendered the position of one who would stand out for the old Jewish national ideas and habits a very trying and a very peculiar one. Here, however, comes in an ancient tradition, recorded by St. Jerome, which throws some light upon the difficulty. Scripture tells us that St. Paul was born at Tarsus. Our Lord, in His conversation with Ananias in Acts ix. 11, calls him "Saul of Tarsus," while again the Apostle himself in the twenty-second chapter describes himself as "a Jew born in Tarsus. But then the question arises, how came his parents to Tarsus, and how, being in Tarsus, could they be described as Hebrews while all around and about them their countrymen were universally Hellenists? St. Jerome here steps in to help us. He relates, in his *Catalogue of Illustrious Writers*, that "Paul the Apostle, previously called Saul, being outside the number of the Twelve, was of the tribe of Benjamin and of the city of the Jewish Gischala; on the capture of which by the Romans he migrated with them to Tarsus." Now this statement of Jerome, written four hundred years after the event, is clearly inaccurate in many respects, and plainly contradicts the Apostle's own words that he was born in Tarsus.

But yet the story probably embodies a tradition substantially true, that St. Paul's parents were originally from Galilee. Galilee was intensely Hebrew. It was provincial, and the provinces are always far less affected by advance in thought or in religion than the towns, which are the chosen homes of innovation and of

progress. Hellenism might flourish in Jerusalem, but in Galilee it would not be tolerated; and the tough, sturdy Galileans alone would have moral and religious grit enough to maintain the old Hebrew customs and language, even amid the abounding inducements to an opposite course which a great commercial centre like Tarsus held out. Assuredly our own experience affords many parallels illustrating the religious history of St. Paul's family. The Evangelical revival, the development of Ritual in the Church of England, made their mark first of all in the towns, and did not affect the distant country districts till long after. The Presbyterianism of the Highlands is almost a different religion from the more enlightened and more cultured worship of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Low Church and Orange developments of Ulster bring us back to the times of the last century, and seem passing strange to the citizens of London, Manchester, or Dublin, who first make their acquaintance in districts where obsolete ideas and cries still retain a power quite forgotten in the vast tide of life and thought which sways the great cities. And yet these rural backwaters, as we may call them, retain their influence, and show strong evidence of life even in the great cities; and so it is that even in London and Edinburgh and Glasgow and Dublin congregations continue to exist in their remoter districts and back streets where the prejudices and ideas of the country find full sway and exercise. The Presbyterianism of the Highlands and the Orangeism of Ulster will be sought in vain in fashionable churches, but in smaller assemblies they will be found exercising a sway and developing a life which will often astonish a superficial observer.

So it was doubtless in Tarsus. The Hebrews of

Galilee would delight to separate themselves. They would look down upon the Hellenism of their fellow-countrymen as a sad falling away from ancient orthodoxy, but their declension would only add a keener zest to the zeal with which the descendants of the Hebrews of Gischala, even in the third and fourth generations, as it may have been, would retain the ancient customs and language of their Galilean forefathers.[1]

St. Paul and his parents might seem to an outsider mere Hellenists, but their Galilean origin and training enabled them to retain the intenser Judaism which

[1] The tradition mentioned by St. Jerome is not the only one which deals with the early life of St. Paul. Another very learned writer of the same, or perhaps we should rather say of a still earlier, period was St. Epiphanius, the historian of Heresies and bishop of Constantia, or Salamis, in Cyprus. He wrote a great work describing the various heresies which had sprung up in the Church, containing much valuable information which his research and early date enabled him to incorporate in his pages. He describes, amongst others, the Ebionites, telling us of their hostility to St. Paul and of the charges they brought against him. The Ebionites denied that he was a Jew at all. The words of Epiphanius are "They say that he was a Greek, and sprung from the Gentiles, and then afterwards became a proselyte," in opposition to which he quotes the Apostle's own words in Phil. iii. 5 and in 2 Cor xi. 22. Epiphanius then proceeds to explain how St. Paul might have been born in Tarsus and yet have been a Jew by nation, because that, under Antiochus Epiphanes and at other times, vast numbers of the Jews had been dispersed as captives among the Gentiles. See Epiphanius, in *Corpus Hæreseologicum*, Ed. Oehler, vol. ii., p. 283. Berlin, 1859. This is a good instance how the Jewish hostility, which pursued St. Paul through life, had not quite died out three centuries later. Epiphanius was born about A.D. 310. He wrote his work on Early Heresies about A.D. 375, calling it *Panarion*, or, as he himself explains in his introductory epistle, the Medicine Chest, full of remedies against the bite of the Old Serpent. Epiphanius must have had a great store of early literature at his command which has now completely perished. See a long and critical account of him and his writings, written by Dr. R. A. Lipsius, in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. ii.

qualified the Apostle to describe himself as not only of the stock of Israel, but as a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

St. Paul's more immediate family connexions have also some light thrown upon them in the New Testament. We learn, for instance, from Acts xxiii. 16, that he had a married sister, who probably lived at Jerusalem, and may have been even a convert to Christianity; for we are told that her son, having heard of the Jewish plot to murder the Apostle, at once reported it to St. Paul himself, who thereupon put his nephew into communication with the chief captain in whose custody he lay. While again, in Romans xvi. 7, 11, he sends salutations to Andronicus, Junias, and Herodion, his kinsmen, who were residents in Rome; and in verse 21 of the same chapter joins Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, his kinsmen, with himself in the Christian wishes for the welfare of the Roman Church, with which he closes the Epistle. It is said, indeed, that this may mean simply that these men were Jews, and that St. Paul regarded all Jews as his kinsmen. But this notion is excluded by the form of the twenty-first verse, where he first sends greetings from Timothy, whom St. Paul dearly loved, and who was a circumcised Jew, not a proselyte merely, but a true Jew, on his mother's side, at least; and then the Apostle proceeds to name the persons whom he designates his kinsmen. St. Paul evidently belonged to a family of some position in the Jewish world, whose ramifications were dispersed into very distant quarters of the empire. Every scrap of information which we can gain concerning the early life and associations of such a man is very precious; we may therefore point out that we can even get a glimpse of the friends and acquaintances of his earliest days. Barnabas the Levite

was of Cyprus, an island only seventy miles distant from Tarsus. In all probability Barnabas may have resorted to the Jewish schools of Tarsus, or may have had some other connexions with the Jewish colony of that city. Some such early friendship may have been the link which bound Paul to Barnabas and enabled the latter to stand sponsor for the newly converted Saul when the Jerusalem Church was yet naturally suspicious of him. "And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles" (Acts ix. 26, 27). This ancient friendship enabled Barnabas to pursue the Apostle with those offices of consolation which his nascent faith demanded. He knew Saul's boyhood haunts, and therefore it is we read in Acts xi. 25 that "Barnabas went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul" when a multitude of the Gentiles began to pour into the Church of Antioch. Barnabas knew his old friend's vigorous, enthusiastic character, his genius, his power of adaptation, and therefore he brought him back to Antioch, where for a whole year they were joined in one holy brotherhood of devout and successful labour for their Master. The friendships and love of boyhood and of youth received a new consecration and were impressed with a loftier ideal from the example of Saul and of Barnabas.

Then again there are other friends of his youth to whom he refers. Timothy's family lived at Lystra, and Lystra was directly connected with Tarsus by a great road which ran straight from Tarsus to Ephesus, offering means for that frequent communication in which the Jews ever delighted. St. Paul's earliest memories carried him back to the devout atmosphere

of the pious Jewish family at Lystra, which he had long known, where Lois the grandmother and Eunice the mother had laid the foundations of that spiritual life which under St. Paul's own later teaching flourished so wondrously in the life of Timothy.[1] Let us pass on, however, to a period of later development. St. Paul's earliest teaching at first was doubtless that of the home. As with Timothy so with the Apostle; his earliest religious teacher was doubtless his mother, who from his infancy imbued him with the great rudimentary truths which lie at the basis of both the Jewish and the Christian faith. His father too took his share. He was a Pharisee, and would be anxious to fulfil every jot and tittle of the law and every minute rule which the Jewish doctors had deduced by an attention and a subtlety concentrated for ages upon the text of the Old Testament. And one great doctor had laid down, "When a boy begins to speak, his father ought to talk with him in the sacred language, and to teach him the law"; a rule which would exactly fall in with his father's natural inclination.[2] He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, though dwelling among Hellenists. He prided himself on speaking the Hebrew language alone, and he therefore would take the greatest pains that the future Apostle's earliest teachings should be in that same sacred tongue, giving him from boyhood that command over Hebrew and its dialects which he afterwards turned to the best of uses.

At five years old Jewish children of parents like

[1] See 2 Tim. i. 5, and iii. 14, 15. It is evident that St. Paul's language implies an acquaintance with Timothy's family of very long standing.

[2] Schœttgen's *Hor. Hebr.*, vol. i., p. 89; Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 7.

St. Paul's advanced to the direct study of the law under the guidance of some doctor, whose school they daily attended, as another rabbi had expressly enacted, "At five years old a boy should apply himself to the study of Holy Scripture." Between five and thirteen Saul was certainly educated at Tarsus, during which period his whole attention was concentrated upon sacred learning and upon mechanical or industrial training. It was at this period of his life that St. Paul must have learned the trade of tentmaking, which during the last thirty years of his life stood him in such good stead, rendering him independent of all external aid so far as his bodily wants were concerned. A question has often been raised as to the social position of St. Paul's family; and people, bringing their Western ideas with them, have thought that the manual trade which he was taught betokened their humble rank. But this is quite a mistake. St. Paul's family must have occupied at least a fairly comfortable position, when they were able to send a member of their house to Jerusalem to be taught in the most celebrated rabbinical school of the time. But it was the law of that school—and a very useful law it was too—that every Jew, and especially every teacher, should possess a trade by which he might be supported did necessity call for it. It was a common proverb among the Jews at that time that "He who taught not his son a trade taught him to be a thief." "It is incumbent on the father to circumcise his son, to redeem him, to teach him the law, and to teach him some occupation, for, as Rabbi Judah saith, whosoever teacheth not his son to do some work is as if he taught him robbery." "Rabbin Gamaliel saith, He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like to a vineyard that is

fenced." Such was the authoritative teaching of the schools, and Jewish practice was in accordance therewith. Some of the most celebrated rabbis of that time were masters of a mechanical art or trade. The Vice-president of the Sanhedrin was a merchant for four years, and then devoted himself to the study of the law. One rabbi was a shoemaker; Rabbi Juda, the great Cabbalist, was a tailor; Rabbi Jose was brought up as a tanner; another rabbi as a baker, and yet another as a carpenter.[1] And so as a preparation for the office and life work to which his father had destined him, St. Paul during his earlier years was taught one of the common trades of Tarsus, which consisted in making tents either out of the hair or the skin of the Angora goats which browsed over the hills of central Asia Minor. It was a trade that was common among Jews. Aquila and his wife Priscilla were tentmakers, and therefore St. Paul united himself to them and wrought at his trade in their company at Corinth (Acts xviii. 3). It has often been asserted that at this period of his life St. Paul must have studied Greek philosophy and literature, and men have pointed to his quotations from the Greek poets Aratus, Epimenides, and Menander to prove the attention

[1] Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XVIII., ix., 1, says of certain Jews of Babylon, "Now there were two men, Asineus and Anileus, brethren to one another. They were destitute of a father, and their mother put them to learn the art of weaving curtains, it not being esteemed a disgrace among them for men to be weavers of cloth." Then we find in the New Testament Simon of Joppa was a tanner, Aquila a tentmaker, the apostles fishermen, and our Lord a carpenter. See a long note on this subject by Mr. Lewin in his *Life of St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 8. Massutius, a Jesuit commentator on St. Paul's life, lib. i., cap. iii., notices that Charlemagne, according to his biographer Eginhard, would have his sons and daughters taught some mechanical trade.

which the Apostle must have bestowed upon them.[1] Tarsus was certainly one of the great universities of that age, ranking in the first place along with Athens and Alexandria. So great was its fame that the Roman emperors even were wont to go to Tarsus to look for tutors to instruct their sons. But Tarsus was at the very same time one of the most morally degraded spots within the bounds of the Roman world, and it is not at all likely that a strict Hebrew, a stern Pharisee, would have allowed his son to encounter the moral taint involved in freely mixing with such a degraded people and in the free study of a literature permeated through and through with sensuality and idolatry. St. Paul doubtless at this early period of his life gained that colloquial knowledge of Greek which was every day becoming more and more necessary for the ordinary purposes of secular life all over the Roman Empire, even in the most backward parts of Palestine.[2] But it is not likely that his parents would have sanctioned his attendance at the lectures on philosophy and poetry delivered at the University of Tarsus, where he would have been initiated into all the abominations of paganism in a style most attractive to human nature.

At thirteen years of age, or thereabouts, young Saul, having now learned all the sacred knowledge which the local rabbis could teach, went up to Jerusalem just as our Lord did, to assume the full obligations of a Jew and to pursue his higher studies at the

[1] See Acts xvii. 28; Titus i. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 33.

[2] See an article on "Greek the Language of Galilee in the time of Christ," by the Rev. Dr. Abbott, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Dublin, in his *Essays chiefly on the Original Texts of the Old and New Testaments*. London, 1891.

great Rabbinical University of Jerusalem. To put it in modern language, Saul went up to Jerusalem to be confirmed and admitted to the full privileges and complete obligations of the Levitical Law, and he also went up to enter college. St. Paul himself describes the period of life on which he now entered as that in which he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. We have already touched in a prior volume upon the subject of Gamaliel's history and his relation to Christianity, but here it is necessary to say something of him as a teacher, in which capacity he laid the foundations of modes of thought and reasoning, the influence of which moulded St. Paul's whole soul and can be traced all through St. Paul's Epistles.

Gamaliel is an undoubtedly historical personage. The introduction of him in the Acts of the Apostles is simply another instance of that marvellous historical accuracy which every fresh investigation and discovery show to be a distinguishing feature of this book. The Jewish Talmud was not committed to writing for more than four centuries after Gamaliel's time,[1] and yet it presents Gamaliel to us in exactly the same light as the inspired record does, telling us that "with the death of Gamaliel I. the reverence for the Divine law ceased, and the observance of purity and abstinence departed." Gamaliel came of a family distinguished in Jewish

[1] Basnage, in his *History of the Jews*, translated by Thomas Taylor, Book III., ch. vi., p. 168 (London, 1708), states, "It is agreed by the generality of Jewish and Christian doctors that the Talmud was completed in the 505th year of the Christian Æra." Cf. Serarius, *De Rabbinis*, Lib. I., c. ix., p. 251; Bartolocci, *Bibl. Rabbin.*, t. i., p. 488, t. iii., p. 359; Morinus, *Exerc. Bibl.*, Lib. II., ex. 6, c. ii. and iii., p. 294. Schaff's *Encyclopædia of Historical Theology*, vol. iii., pp. 2292-96, has a good article on the Talmud, giving a long list of authorities to which reference may be made by any one interested in this subject.

history both before and after his own time. He was of the royal House of David, and possessed in this way great historical claims upon the respect of the nation. His grandfather Hillel and his father Simeon were celebrated teachers and expounders of the law. His grandfather had founded indeed one of the leading schools of interpretation then favoured by the rabbis. His father Simeon is said by some to have been the aged man who took up the infant Christ in his arms and blessed God for His revealed salvation in the words of the *Nunc Dimittis*; while, as for Gamaliel himself, his teaching was marked by wisdom, prudence, liberality, and spiritual depth so far as such qualities could exist in a professor of rabbinical learning. Gamaliel was a friend and contemporary of Philo, and this fact alone must have imported an element of liberality into his teaching. Philo was a widely read scholar who strove to unite the philosophy of Greece to the religion of Palestine, and Philo's ideas must have permeated more or less into some at least of the schools of Jerusalem, so that, though St. Paul may not have come in contact with Greek literature in Tarsus, he may very probably have learned much about it in a Judaised, purified, spiritualised shape in Jerusalem. But the influence exercised on St. Paul by Gamaliel and through him by Philo, or men of his school, can be traced in other respects.[1]

The teaching of Gamaliel was as spiritual, I have said, as rabbinical teaching could have been; but this is not saying very much from the Christian point of

[1] Philo is the subject of a very long and learned article by Dr. Edersheim in Smith's *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. iv., with which may be compared a shorter article in Schaff's *Encyclopædia of Hist. Theol.*, vol. ii.

view. The schools at Jerusalem in the time of Gamaliel were wholly engaged in studies of the most wearisome, narrow, petty, technical kind. Dr. Farrar has illustrated this subject with a great wealth of learning and examples in the fourth chapter of his *Life of St. Paul.* The Talmud alone shows this, throwing a fearful light upon the denunciations of our Lord as regards the Pharisees, for it devotes a whole treatise to washings of the hands, and another to the proper method of killing fowls. The Pharisaic section of the Jews held, indeed, that there were two hundred and forty-eight commandments and three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions involved in the Jewish Law, all of them equally binding, and all of them so searching that if only one solitary Jew could be found who for one day kept them all and transgressed in no one direction, then the captivity of God's people would cease and the Messiah would appear.[1]

I am obliged to pass over this point somewhat rapidly, and yet it is a most important one if we desire to know what kind of training the Apostle received; for, no matter how God's grace may descend and the Divine Spirit may change the main directions of a man's life, he never quite recovers himself from the effects of his early teaching. Dr. Farrar has bestowed much time and labour on this point. The following brief extract from his eloquent words will give a vivid idea of the endless puerilities, the infinite questions of pettiest, most minute, and most subtle bearing with which the time of St. Paul and his fellow-students must have been taken up, and which must have made him bitterly feel

[1] These facts throw much light upon our Lord's words in Matt. xv. 1-9 and xxii. 34-40.

in the depths of his inmost being that, though the law may have been originally intended as a source of life, it had been certainly changed as regards his own particular case, and had become unto him an occasion of death.

"Moreover, was there not mingled with all this nominal adoration of the Law a deeply seated hypocrisy, so deep that it was in a great measure unconscious? Even before the days of Christ the rabbis had learnt the art of straining out gnats and swallowing camels. They had long learnt to nullify what they professed to defend. The ingenuity of Hillel was quite capable of getting rid of any Mosaic regulation which had been found practically burdensome. Pharisees and Sadducees alike had managed to set aside in their own favour, by the devices of the mixtures, all that was disagreeable to themselves in the Sabbath scrupulosity.[1] The fundamental institution of the Sabbatic year had been stultified by the mere legal fiction of the Prosbol.[2] Teachers who were on the high road to a casuistry which could construct

[1] The rabbinical device of mixtures is fully explained in Buxtorf's *Lexicon*, col. 1657, Ed. Basil (1639), or in Kitto's *Biblical Encyclopædia*, under the article "Sabbath." The Talmud had a special treatise called *Tractatus Mixtorum*, which taught how, for instance, dwellings might be mixed or mingled so as to avoid technical breaches of the Sabbatical law. Planks were laid across intervening residences, so that houses at a very great distance might be brought into touch and connexion, and thus regarded as one common dwelling for a number of people who wished for a common feast on the Sabbath. This was called *Mixtio conclavium*. It was simply one of those wretched devices to which casuistry always leads; something like the rules for banquets on fast days, which we find in Lacroix, *Manners of the Middle Ages*, p. 170, where a most sumptuous Episcopal banquet is described. It was given on a fast day, therefore no flesh is included; but its place was amply supplied by rare fish and other dainties: see G. T. Stokes, *Ireland and Anglo-Norman Church*, p. 143.

[2] Prosbol is simply a transliteration into Hebrew of two Greek words,

rules out of every superfluous particle, had found it easy to win credit for ingenuity by elaborating prescriptions to which Moses would have listened in mute astonishment. If there be one thing more definitely laid down in the Law than another, it is the uncleanness of creeping things; yet the Talmud assures us that 'no one is appointed a member of the Sanhedrin who does not possess sufficient ingenuity to prove from the written Law that a creeping thing is ceremonially clean'; and that there was an unimpeachable disciple at Jabne who could adduce one hundred and fifty arguments in favour of the ceremonial cleanness of creeping things. Sophistry like this was at work even in the days when the young student of Tarsus sat at the feet of Gamaliel; and can we imagine any period of his life when he would not have been wearied by a system at once so meaningless, so stringent, and so insincere?"

These words are true, thoroughly true, in their extremest sense. Casuistry is at all times a dangerous weapon with which to play, a dangerous science upon which to concentrate one's attention. The mind is so pleased with the fascination of the precipice that one is perpetually tempted to see how near an approach

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πρὸς βουλήν. The Jewish Law enacted a cancelling of all debts in the Sabbatic year on the part of Jews towards their brethren. This enactment was found to hinder commerce about the time of Hillel—*i.e.*, 75 years B.C. The rich would not lend to the poor on account of the Sabbatical year. So the doctors devised the Prosbol, which was a declaration to the effect that the Sabbatical year was not to affect the debt. There was a legal fiction invented which made void the law. The creditor said to the debtor, "In accordance with the Sabbatical year I remit thee the debt," and then the debtor replied, "Nevertheless I wish to pay it," and then the creditor was free from the obligation of Deut. xv.

can be made without a catastrophe, and then the catastrophe happens when it is least expected. But when the casuist's attention is concentrated upon one volume like the law of Moses, interpreted in the thousand methods and combinations open to the luxuriant imagination of the East, then indeed the danger is infinitely increased, and we cease to wonder at the vivid, burning, scorching denunciations of the Lord as He proclaimed the sin of those who enacted that "Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor." St. Paul's whole time must have been taken up in the school of Gamaliel with an endless study of such casuistical trifles; and yet that period of his life left marks which we can clearly trace throughout his writings. The method, for instance, in which St. Paul quotes the Old Testament is thoroughly rabbinical. It was derived from the rules prevalent in the Jewish schools, and therefore, though it may seem to us at times forced and unnatural, must have appeared to St. Paul and to the men of his time absolutely conclusive. When reading the Scriptures we Westerns forget the great difference between Orientals and the nations of Western Europe. Aristotle and his logic and his logical methods, with major and minor premises and conclusions following therefrom, absolutely dominate our thoughts. The Easterns knew nothing of Aristotle, and his methods availed nothing to their minds. They argued in quite a different style, and used a logic which he would have simply scorned. Analogy, allegory, illustration, form the staple elements of Eastern logic, and in their use St. Paul was elaborately trained in Gamaliel's classes, and of their use his writings furnish abundant examples; the most notable of which will be found in

his allegorical interpretation of the events of the wilderness journey of Israel in 1 Corinthians x. 1-4, where the pillar of cloud, and the passage of the Red Sea, and the manna, and the smitten rock become the emblems and types of the Christian Sacraments; and again, in St. Paul's mystical explanation of Galatians iv. 21-31, where Hagar and Sarah are represented as typical of the two covenants, the old covenant leading to spiritual bondage and the new introducing to gospel freedom.[1]

These, indeed, are the most notable examples of St. Paul's method of exegesis derived from the school of

[1] The parallel between Hagar and Sarah is drawn out at full length after the rabbinical method in Basnage's *History of the Jews* (Taylor's translation), book iii., ch. 22; in Lightfoot's *Galatians*, pp. 178, 179, 189-99, and Farrar's *St. Paul*, ch. iii. Philo in his writings uses the very same illustration. Perhaps it may be well to add the concluding words of Bishop Lightfoot when discussing on p. 197 of his *Galatians*, the similar use made by St. Paul and by Philo of this illustration of Hagar: "At the same time we need not fear to allow that St. Paul's method of teaching here is coloured by his early education in the rabbinical schools. It were as unreasonable to stake the Apostle's inspiration on the turn of a metaphor or the character of an illustration or the form of an argument, as on purity of diction. No one now thinks of maintaining that the language of the inspired writers reaches the classical standard of correctness and elegance, though at one time it was held almost a heresy to deny this. 'A treasure contained in earthen vessels,' 'strength made perfect in weakness,' 'rudeness in speech, yet not in knowledge,' such is the far nobler conception of inspired teaching, which we may gather from the Apostle's own language. And this language we should do well to bear in mind. But, on the other hand it were mere dogmatism to set up the intellectual standard of our own age or country as an infallible rule. The power of allegory has been differently felt in different ages, as it is differently felt at any one time by diverse nations. Analogy, allegory, metaphor—by what boundaries are these separated the one from the other? What is true or false, correct or incorrect, as an analogy or an allegory? What argumentative force must be assigned to either? We should at least be prepared with an answer to these questions before we venture to sit in judgment on any individual case."

Gamaliel, but there are numberless others scattered all through his writings. If we view them through Western spectacles, we shall be disappointed and miss their force; but if we view them sympathetically, if we remember that the Jews quoted and studied the Old Testament to find illustrations of their own ideas rather than proofs in our sense of the word, studied them as an enthusiastic Shakespeare or Tennyson or Wordsworth student pores over his favourite author to find parallels which others, who are less bewitched, find very slight and very dubious indeed,[1] then we shall come to see how it is that St. Paul quotes an illustration of his doctrine of justification by faith from Habakkuk ii. 4—"The soul of the proud man is not upright, but the just man shall live by his steadfastness"; a passage which originally applied to the Chaldeans and the Jews, predicting that the former should enjoy no stable prosperity, but that the Jews, ideally represented as the just or upright man, should live securely because of their fidelity;[2] and can find an allusion to the resurrection of Christ in "the sure mercies of David," which God had promised to give His people in the third verse of the fifty-fifth of Isaiah.[3]

[1] The latest instance of this method which I have noticed is *Illustrations of Tennyson*, by J. C. Collins, reviewed by the Dean of Armagh in the January number of the *Bookman*, where a number of such parallelisms are quoted which seem to me rather dubious.

[2] Bishop Lightfoot, on Galatians iii. 11, says of this verse, "In its original context the passage has reference to the temporal calamities inflicted by the Chaldean invasion. Here a spiritual meaning and general application are given to words referring primarily to special external incidents." See also Farrar on St. Paul's method of scriptural quotation, in his *Life of St. Paul*, ch. iii.

[3] See St. Paul's address to the Jews of the Pisidian Antioch in Acts xiii. 34. Other specimens of the same rabbinical method used by St. Paul will be found in Rom. iii., iv., and ix. 33; 1 Cor. ix. Eph. iv. &

Rabbinical learning, Hebrew discipline, Greek experience and life, these conspired together with natural impulse and character to frame and form and mould a man who must make his mark upon the world at large in whatever direction he chooses for his walk in life. It will now be our duty to show what were the earliest results of this very varied education.[1]

[1] The great leaders in the divine struggle for righteousness, in every great onward movement on behalf of truth have always been men of this varied training. Moses, David, Elijah, Ezra, Saul of Tarsus, were great leaders of thought and action and they were all men whose education had been developed in very various schools. They were not men of books merely, nor men of action alone. They gained the flexibility of mind, the genuine liberality of thought which led them out of the old rucks by experiences gained from very opposite directions. The mere man of books may be very narrow; the practical man, whose knowledge is limited to every day affairs and whose horizon is bounded by to-morrow, is often an unthinking bigot. A man trained like Moses, or David, or Saul is the true leader of men for his mind is trained to receive truths from every quarter.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONVERSION OF THE PERSECUTOR.

"But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."—ACTS viii. 3.

"But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." —ACTS ix. 1-6.

WE have in the last chapter traced the course of St. Paul's life as we know it from his own reminiscences, from hints in Holy Scripture, and from Jewish history and customs. The Jewish nation is exactly like all the nations of the East, in one respect at least. They are all intensely conservative, and though time has necessarily introduced some modifications, yet the course of education, and the force of prejudice, and the power of custom have in the main remained unchanged down to the present time. We now proceed to view St. Paul, not as we imagine his course of life and education to have been, but as we follow him in the exhibition of his active powers, in the full play and

swing of that intellectual energy, of those religious aims and objects for which he had been so long training.

St. Paul at his first appearance upon the stage of Christian history, upon the occasion of St. Stephen's martyrdom, had arrived at the full stature of manhood both in body and in mind. He was then the young man Saul; an expression which enables us to fix with some approach to accuracy the time of his birth. St. Paul's contemporary Philo in one of his works divides man's life into seven periods, the fourth of which is young manhood, which he assigns to the years between twenty-one and twenty-eight. Roughly speaking, and without attempting any fine-drawn distinctions for which we have not sufficient material, we may say that at the martyrdom of St. Stephen St. Paul was about thirty years of age, or some ten years or thereabouts junior to our Lord as His years would have been numbered according to those of the sons of men. One circumstance, indeed, would seem to indicate that St. Paul must have been then over and above the exact line of thirty. It is urged, and that upon the ground of St. Paul's own language, that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. In the twenty-sixth chapter, defending himself before King Agrippa, St. Paul described his own course of action prior to his conversion as one of bitterest hostility to the Christian cause: "I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, *and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them*"; an expression which clearly indicates that he was a member of a body and possessed a vote in an assembly which determined questions of life and death, and that could have been nothing else than the Sanhedrin, into which no one was admitted before he had completed thirty years. St. Paul, then, when he is first introduced

to our notice, comes before us as a full-grown man and a well-trained, carefully educated, thoroughly disciplined rabbinical scholar, whose prejudices were naturally excited against the new Galilean sect, and who had given public expression to his feelings by taking decided steps in opposition to its progress. The sacred narrative now sets before us (i) the Conduct of St. Paul in his unconverted state, (ii) his Mission, (iii) his Journey, and (iv) his Conversion. Let us take the many details and circumstances connected with this passage under these four divisions.

I. *The Conduct of Saul.* Here we have a picture of St. Paul in his unconverted state: "Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." This description is amply borne out by St. Paul himself, in which he even enlarges and gives us additional touches of the intensity of his antichristian hate. His ignorant zeal at this period seems to have printed itself deep upon memory's record. There are no less than at least seven different notices in the Acts or scattered through the Epistles, due to his own tongue or pen, and dealing directly with his conduct as a persecutor. No matter how he rejoiced in the fulness and blessedness of Christ's pardon, no matter how he experienced the power and working of God's Holy Spirit, St. Paul never could forget the intense hatred with which he had originally followed the disciples of the Master. Let us note them, for they all bear out, expand, and explain the statement of the passage we are now considering.

In his address to the Jews of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts xxii. he appeals to his former conduct as an evidence of his sincerity. In verses 4 and 5 he says, "I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and deliver-

ing into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren,[1] and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also which were there unto Jerusalem in bonds, for to be punished." In the same discourse he recurs a second time to this topic; for, telling his audience of the vision granted to him in the temple, he says, verse 19, "And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: and when the blood of Stephen Thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him." St. Paul dwells upon the same topic in the twenty-sixth chapter, when addressing King Agrippa in verses 9-11, a passage already quoted in part: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted

[1] What an interesting anticipation of Christian times do we find in this passage. "The estate of the elders" is the Presbytery in the original Greek, and the words "the brethren" by which St. Paul refers to his unconverted fellow-countrymen are an anticipation of the expression he always uses for the Christian believers. Even in these little details Christianity is but an expansion of Judaism, as, in another direction, the Catacombs of Rome and the ornamentation used therein were all derived from the customs of the Jewish colony in Rome long before the time of Christ. See a treatise by Schurer, called *Die Gemeindeverfassung der Juden in Rom in der Kaiserzeit*, p. 13 (Leipzig, 1879), where that learned writer points out the continuity between Judaism in Rome and early Christianity.

them even unto foreign cities." It is the same in his Epistles. In four different places does he refer to his conduct as a persecutor—in 1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13; Phil. iii. 6; and 1 Tim. i. 13; while again in the chapter now under consideration, the ninth of Acts, we find that the Jews of the synagogue in Damascus, who were listening to St. Paul's earliest outburst of Christian zeal, asked, "Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havock of them which called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests"; using the very same word "making havock" as St. Paul himself uses in the first of Galatians, which in Greek is very strong, expressing a course of action accompanied with fire and blood and murder such as occurs when a city is taken by storm.

Now these passages have been thus set forth at length because they add many details to the bare statement of Acts ix., giving us a glimpse into those four or five dark and bloody years, the thought of which henceforth weighed so heavily upon the Apostle's mind and memory. Just let us notice these additional touches. He shut up in prison many of the saints, both men and women, and that in Jerusalem before he went to Damascus at all. He scourged the disciples in every synagogue, meaning doubtless that he superintended the punishment, as it was the duty of the Chazan, the minister or attendant of the synagogue, to scourge the condemned, and thus strove to make them blaspheme Christ. He voted for the execution of the disciples when he acted as a member of the Sanhedrin. And lastly he followed the disciples and persecuted them in foreign cities. We gain in this way a much fuller idea of the young enthusiast's persecuting zeal

than usually is formed from the words "Saul yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," which seem to set forth Saul as roused to wild and savage excitement by St. Stephen's death, and then continuing that course in the city of Jerusalem for a very brief period. Whereas, on the contrary, St. Paul's fuller statements, when combined, represent him as pursuing a course of steady, systematic, and cruel repression, which St. Paul largely helped to inaugurate, but which continued to exist as long as the Jews had the power to inflict corporal punishments and death on the members of their own nation. He visited all the synagogues in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine, scourging and imprisoning. He strove—and this is, again, another lifelike touch,—to compel the disciples to blaspheme the name of Christ in the same manner as the Romans were subsequently wont to test Christians by calling upon them to cry anathema to the name of their Master.[1] He even extended his activity beyond the bounds of the Holy Land, and that in various directions. The visit to Damascus may not by any means have been his first journey to a foreign town with thoughts bent on the work of persecution. He expressly says to Agrippa,

[1] St. Paul, indeed, in his persecuting days may have been the inventor of the test, which seems to have consisted in a declaration that Jesus was not the Christ, but an impostor. We find a reference to the Jewish custom of blaspheming the name of Jesus in the Epistle of James (ii. 6, 7): "Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable name by the which ye are called?" with which may be compared St. Paul's words in 1 Cor. xii. 3: "No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema." The same custom continued in the second century, as we learn from frequent notices in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* with Trypho the Jew, as in the following quotations: ch. xvi., "cursing in your synagogues those that believe on Christ"; in ch. xlvii. he enumer-

"I persecuted them even unto foreign cities." He may have visited Tarsus, or Lystra, or the cities of Cyprus or Alexandria itself, urged on by the consuming fire of his blind, restless zeal, before he entered upon the journey to Damascus, destined to be the last undertaken in opposition to Jesus Christ. When we thus strive to realise the facts of the case, we shall see that the scenes of blood and torture and death, the ruined homes, the tears, the heartbreaking separations which the young man Saul had caused in his blind zeal for the law, and which are briefly summed up in the words "he made havock of the Church," were quite sufficient to account for that profound impression of his own unworthiness and of God's great mercy towards him which he ever cherished to his dying day.[1]

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ates amongst those who shall not be saved "those who have anathematised and do anathematise this very Christ in the synagogues"; and in ch. cxxxvii. he exhorts the Jews, "Assent, therefore, and pour no ridicule on the Son of God; obey not the Pharisaic teachers, and scoff not at the King of Israel, as the rulers of your synagogues teach you to do after your prayers." The Romans, as I have said, early borrowed the custom from the Jews. They strove to compel the Christians to blaspheme, as we see from Pliny's well-known epistle to Trajan in his *Epistles*, book x., 97, where he describes certain persons brought before him as "invoking the gods, worshipping the emperor's statue, and reviling the name of Christ, whereas there is no forcing those who are really Christians into any of these compliances."

[1] St. Paul, in 1 Tim. i. 15, says, "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." This verse is of ancient and of very modern interest too. It shows that to the last St. Paul retained the keenest sense of his early wickedness. It is of present interest because it helps to correct a modern error. There are people who object to use the Litany and the Lord's Prayer because of the prayers for forgiveness of sins and the occurrence of such expressions as 'Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." Their argument is, that believers have been washed from all their sins, and therefore should not describe themselves as miserable sinners. St. Paul, however, saw no inconsistency between

II. *The Mission of Saul.* Again, we notice in this passage that Saul, having shown his activity in other directions, now turned his attention to Damascus. There were political circumstances which may have hitherto hindered him from exercising the same supervision over the synagogue of Damascus which he had already extended to other foreign cities. The political

God's free forgiving love and his own humility in designating himself the chief of sinners. God may have cast all our sins behind His back; but, viewing the matter from the human side, it is well, nay, it is absolutely necessary, if spiritual pride is to be hindered in its rapid growth, for us to cherish a remembrance of the sins and backslidings of other days. The greatest saints, the richest spiritual teachers have ever felt the necessity of it. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* mingles perpetual reminiscences of his own wickedness with his assured sense of God's mercy. Hooker deals in his own profound style with such objection to the Litany in the Fifth Book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, ch. xlvii., where he writes, replying to the objection that the expressions of the Litany implying fear of God do not become God's saints: "The knowledge of our own unworthiness is not without belief in the merits of Christ. With that true fear which the one causeth there is coupled true boldness, and encouragement drawn from the other. The very silence which our own unworthiness putteth us unto doth itself make request for us, and that in the consequence of His grace. Looking inward we are stricken dumb, looking upward we speak and prevail. O happy mixture, wherein things contrary do so qualify and correct the danger of the other's excess, that neither boldness can make us presume as long as we are kept under with the sense of our own wretchedness; nor while we trust in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, fear be able to tyrannise over us! As therefore our fear excludeth not that boldness which becometh saints; so if their *familiarity* with God (referring to his opponents) do not savour of this fear, it draweth too near that irreverent confidence wherewith true humility can never stand." Bishop Jeremy Taylor understood the bearing of St. Paul's view on personal religion. In his *Holy Living*, in the chapter on Humility, he teaches those who seek that grace thus: "Every day call to mind some one of thy foulest sins, or the most shameful of thy disgraces, or the indiscreetest of thy actions, or anything that did then most trouble thee, and apply it to the present swelling of thy spirit and opinion, and it may help to allay it."

history and circumstances of Damascus at this period are indeed rather obscure. The city seems to have been somewhat of a bone of contention between Herod Antipas, Aretas the king of Petra, and the Romans. About the time of St. Paul's conversion, which may be fixed at A.D. 37 or 38, there was a period of great disturbance in Palestine and Southern Syria. Pontius Pilate was deposed from his office and sent to Rome for judgment. Vitellius, the president of the whole Province of Syria, came into Palestine, changing the high priests, conciliating the Jews, and intervening in the war which raged between Herod Antipas and Aretas, his father-in-law. In the course of this last struggle Damascus seems to have changed its masters, and, while a Roman city till the year 37, it henceforth became an Arabian city, the property of King Aretas, till the reign of Nero, when it again returned beneath the Roman sway. Some one or other, or perhaps all these political circumstances combined may have hitherto prevented the Sanhedrin from taking active measures against the disciples at Damascus. But now things became settled. Caiaphas was deposed from the office of high priest upon the departure of Pontius Pilate. He had been a great friend and ally of Pilate; Vitellius therefore deprived Caiaphas of his sacred office, appointing in his stead Jonathan, son of Annas, the high priest. This Jonathan did not, however, long continue to occupy the position, as he was deposed by the same Roman magistrate, Vitellius, at the feast of Pentecost in the very same year, his brother Theophilus being appointed high priest in his room; so completely was the whole Levitical hierarchy, the entire Jewish establishment, ruled by the political officers of the Roman state. This Theophilus continued to hold the office for five or

six years, and it must have been to Theophilus that Saul applied for letters unto Damascus authorising him to arrest the adherents of the new religion.[1]

And now a question here arises, How is it that the high priest could exercise such powers and arrest his co-religionists in a foreign town? The answer to this sheds a flood of light upon the state of the Jews of the Dispersion, as they were called. I have already said a little on this point, but it demands fuller discussion.[2] The high priest at Jerusalem was regarded as a kind of head of the whole nation. He was viewed by the Romans as the Prince of the Jews,[3] with whom they could formally treat, and by whom they could manage a nation which, differing from all others in its manners and customs, was scattered all over the world, and often gave much trouble. Julius Cæsar laid down the lines on which Jewish privileges and Roman policy were based, and that half a century before the Christian era. Julius Cæsar had been greatly assisted in his Alexandrian war by the Jewish high priest Hyrcanus, so he issued an edict in the year 47 B.C., which, after reciting the services of Hyrcanus, proceeds thus, "I command that Hyrcanus and his children do retain all the rights of the high priest, whether established by law or accorded by courtesy; and if hereafter any question arise touching the Jewish polity, I desire that the determination thereof be referred to him"; an edict which, confirmed as it was again and

[1] The references for all these changes are given in Lewin's *Fasti*, and in his *Life of St. Paul*, with which Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XVIII., iv., should be compared.

[2] See vol. i., pp. 174-6, 271.

[3] The decree of Julius Cæsar, upon which the Jewish privileges were built, expressly calls the high priest the ethnarch (ἐθνάρχης), or ruler, of the Jews. See Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XIV., x., 3.

again, not only by Julius Cæsar, but by several subsequent emperors, gave the high priest the fullest jurisdiction over the Jews, wherever they dwelt, in things pertaining to their own religion.[1] It was therefore in strictest accord with Roman law and custom that, when Saul wished to arrest members of the synagogue at Damascus, he should make application to the high priest Theophilus for a warrant enabling him to effect his purpose.

The description, too, given of the disciples in this passage is very noteworthy and a striking evidence of the truthfulness of the narrative. The disciples were the men of "the Way." Saul desired to bring any of "the Way" found at Damascus to be judged at Jerusalem, because the Sanhedrin alone possessed the right to pass capital sentences in matters of religion. The synagogues at Damascus or anywhere else could flog culprits, and a Jew could get no redress for any such ill-treatment even if he sought it, which would have not been at all likely; but if the final sentence of death were to be passed, the Jerusalem Sanhedrin was the only tribunal competent to entertain such questions.[2] And the persons he desired to hale before

[1] This point is worked out at great length and with a multitude of references in Lewin's *Life of St. Paul*, ch. iv., vol. i., pp. 44-7. Josephus, in his *Antiquities*, book xiv., ch. x., gives the words of Cæsar's decree. In ch. viii. of the same book he describes the warlike assistance lent by the Jews to Julius Cæsar in his Egyptian campaign.

[2] I know it is a common opinion that the Jews had no power of capital punishment and that the Romans permitted the infliction merely of scourgings and such minor penalties. Lightfoot, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* on Matt. xxvi. 3; John xviii. 31; Acts ix. 2, controverts this view in long and learned notes. The Jews certainly stated to Pilate, according to John xviii. 31, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." But then, on the other hand, the Sanhedrin put St. Stephen to death, and St. Paul tells us that when the saints were put to death he voted against

this awful tribunal were the men of the Way. This was the name by which, in its earliest and purest day, the Church called itself. In the nineteenth chapter and ninth verse we read of St. Paul's labours at Ephesus and the opposition he endured: "But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude"; while again, in his defence before Felix (xxiv. 14), we read, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers." The Revised translation of the New Testament has well brought out the force of the original in a manner that was utterly missed in the Authorised Version, and has

them; showing that the Sanhedrin did put many of the disciples to death. Lightfoot thinks that the Jews merely wished to throw the odium of our Lord's execution upon the Romans, and therefore pleaded their own inability to condemn Him for a capital offence, because of the particular chamber where the Sanhedrin then sat, where it was unlawful to judge a capital crime. The Pharisees, too, joined in the attempt to bring about our Lord's death, and their traditions made them averse to the shedding of Jewish blood by the Sanhedrin. The Sadducees were, however, the dominant party in the year 37, and they had no such scruples. They were always of a cruel and bloodthirsty disposition and stern in their punishments, as Josephus tells us in his *Antiqq.*, XX., ix., 1. This was of course the natural result of their material philosophy which regarded man as devoid of any immortal principle. Lightfoot gives instances too (Matt. xxvi. 3) of a priest's daughter burned to death and of a man stoned at Lydda even after the destruction of the city, showing that the Sanhedrin still contrived to exercise capital jurisdiction. The time when Saul set out for Damascus was very favourable from political reasons for any new or unusual assumptions of authority on the part of the Sanhedrin. Vitellius the Prefect was very anxious to be deferential in every way to the Jewish authorities. He had just restored the custody of the high priest's robes to the Sanhedrin and the priests. This may nave encouraged them to adopt the fiercest and sternest measures against the new sectaries. As for the minor punishment of flogging, the synagogues in Holland have been known to exercise it so lately as the seventeenth century.

emphasized for us a great truth concerning the early Christians. There was a certain holy intolerance even about the very name they imposed upon the earliest Church. It was the Way, the only Way, the Way of Life. The earliest Christians had a lively recollection of what the Apostles had heard from the mouth of the Master Himself, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father but by Me"; and so, realising the identity of Christ and His people, realising the continued presence of Christ in His Church, they designated that Church by a term which expressed their belief that in it alone was the road to peace, the sole path of access to God. This name "the Way" expressed their sense of the importance of the truth. Their's was no easy-going religion which thought that it made not the slightest matter what form of belief a man professed. They were awfully in earnest, because they knew of only one way to God, and that was the religion and Church of Jesus Christ. Therefore it was that they were willing to suffer all things rather than that they should lose this Way, or that others should miss it through their default. The marvellous, the intense missionary efforts of the primitive Church find their explanation in this expression, the Way. God had revealed the Way and had called themselves into it, and their great duty in life was to make others know the greatness of this salvation; or, as St. Paul puts it, "Necessity is laid upon me; woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."[1]

The exclusive claims of Christianity are thus early

[1] The Acts of the Apostles in this respect throws an interesting light upon the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, published a few years ago by Bishop Bryennius, and helps us to fix its early date. That

set forth; and it was these same exclusive claims which caused Christianity to be so hated and persecuted by the pagans.[1] The Roman Empire would not have so bitterly resented the preaching of Christ, if His followers would have accepted the position with which other religions were contented. The Roman Empire was not intolerant of new ideas in matters of religion. Previous to the coming of our Lord the pagans had welcomed the strange, mystic rites and teaching of Egypt. They accepted from Persia the curious system and worship of Mithras within the first century after Christ's crucifixion. And tradition tells that at least two of the emperors were willing to admit the image of Christ into the Pantheon, which they had consecrated

important relic of early Christianity never speaks of the followers of the new religion as Christians. It opens by describing the two ways, the way of Life, which is Christianity, and the way of Death. It must therefore have been composed when the memory of the Church's earliest designation, "the Way," was still fresh. By the time of Aristides (A.D. 125) and of Pliny the title "Christians" was the common one both inside and outside the Church.

[1] This sense of the awful importance of Christianity as the Way made the Christians enthusiastic and determined in their efforts to spread their religion. In the earliest apology or defence of Christianity, that of Aristides, which I have fully described in the previous volume of this Commentary, we find this fact openly avowed and gloried in as in the following passage: "As for their servants or handmaids, or their children, if they have any, they persuade them to become Christians for the love they have towards them; and when they have become so, they call them without distinction brethren." A system so broad as to view all religions as equally important would never have innate force enough to lead a man to become a missionary, and most certainly never would have produced a martyr. Christianity really understood is a very broad religion; its essential dogmas are very few; but there is a kind of breadth in religion now fashionable which the early Christians never understood or they would not have acted as they did. Who would have thrown away his life amid the cruellest tortures if it was all the same whether men worshipped Jupiter or Jesus Christ

to the memory of the great and good.[1] But the Christians would have nothing to say or do with such partial honours for their Master. Religion for them was Christ alone or else it was nothing, and that because He alone was the Way. As there was but one God for them, so there was but one Mediator, Christ Jesus.

III. *Saul's Journey.* "As he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus." This is the simple record left us in Holy Writ of this momentous event. A comparison of the sacred record with any of the numerous lives of St. Paul which have been published will show us how very different their points of view. The mere human narratives dwell upon the external features of the scene, enlarge upon the light which modern discoveries have thrown upon the lines of road which connected Jerusalem with Southern Syria, become enthusiastic over the beauty of Damascus as seen by the traveller from Jerusalem, over the eternal green of the groves and gardens which are still, as of old, made glad by the waters of Abana and of Pharpar; while the sacred narrative passes over all external details and marches straight to the great central fact of the persecutor's conversion. And we find no fault with this. It is well that the human narratives should enlarge as

[1] Tertullian, about the year 200, tells us (*Apologet.*, ch. v. and xxi.) that the Emperor Tiberius, under whom our Lord suffered, was so moved by Pilate's report of the miracles and resurrection of Christ as to propose a bill to the Senate that Christ should be received among the gods of Rome; while, as for Emperor Alexander Severus, A.D. 222 to 235, he went even further. In Christ he recognised a Divine Being equal with the other gods; and in his domestic chapel he placed the bust of Christ along with the images of those men whom he regarded as beings of a superior order—of Apollonius of Tyana, and Orpheus, and such like. Heliogabalus, A.D. 219, is credited with a desire to have blended Christianity with the worship of the Sun: see Neander, *Church History*, vol. i., pp. 128, 173, Bohn's edition.

they do upon the outward features and circumstances of the journey, because they thus help us to realise the Acts as a veritable history that was lived and acted. We are too apt to idealise the Bible, to think of it as dealing with an unreal world, and to regard the men and women thereof as beings of another type from ourselves. Books like Farrar's and Lewin's and Conybeare and Howson's *Lives of St. Paul* correct this tendency, and make the Acts of the Apostles infinitely more interesting by rendering St. Paul's career human and lifelike and clothing it with the charm of local detail. It is thus that we can guess at the very road by which the enthusiastic Saul travelled. The caravans from Egypt to Damascus are intensely conservative in their routes. In fact, even in our own revolutionary West trade and commerce preserve in large measure the same routes to-day as they used two thousand years ago. The great railways of England, and much more the great main roads, preserve in a large degree the same directions which the ancient Roman roads observed. In Ireland, with which I am still better acquainted, I know that the great roads starting from Dublin preserve in the main the same lines as in the days of St. Patrick.[1] And so it is, but only to a much greater degree, in Palestine and throughout the East. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho preserved in St. Jerome's time, four centuries later, the same direction and the same character as in our Lord's day, so that it was then called the Bloody Road, from the frequent robberies; and thus it is still, for the pilgrims who now go to visit the Jordan are furnished with a guard of Turkish soldiers to protect

[1] See Petrie's "Tara" in the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, t. xviii., and *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, by G. T. Stokes, pp. 80, 81, for illustrations of this point.

them from the Arab bandits. And to-day, as in the first century, the caravans from Egypt and Jerusalem to Damascus follow either of two roads: one which proceeds through Gaza and Ramleh, along the coast, and then, turning eastward about the borders of Samaria and Galilee, crosses the Jordan and proceeds through the desert to Damascus—that is the Egyptian road;[1] while the other, which serves for travellers from Jerusalem, runs due north from that city and joins the other road at the entrance to Galilee. This latter was probably the road which St. Paul took. The distance which he had to traverse is not very great. One hundred and thirty-six miles separate Jerusalem from Damascus, a journey which is performed in five or six days by such a company as Saul had with him. We get a hint, too, of the manner in which he travelled. He rode probably on a horse or a mule, like modern travellers on the same road, as we gather from Acts ix. 4 compared with xxii. 7, passages which represent Saul and his companions as falling to the earth when the supernatural light flashed upon their astonished vision.

The exact spot where Saul was arrested in his mad career is a matter of some debate; some fix it close to the city of Damascus, half a mile or so from the south gate on the high road to Jerusalem. Dr. Porter, whose long residence at Damascus made him an authority on the locality, places the scene of the conversion at the village of Caucabe, ten miles away, where the traveller from Jerusalem gets his first glimpse of the towers and groves of Damascus. We are not anxious to determine this point. The great spiritual

[1] See Geikie's *The Holy Land and the Bible*, p. 38.

truth which is the centre and core of the whole matter remains, and that central truth is this, that it was when he drew near to Damascus and the crowning act of violence seemed at hand, then the Lord put forth His power—as He so often still does just when men are about to commit some dire offence—arrested the persecutor, and then, amid the darkness of that abounding light, there rose upon the vision of the astonished Saul at Caucabe, "the place of the star," that true Star of Bethlehem which never ceased its clear shining for him till he came unto the perfect day.[1]

IV. Lastly we have the actual conversion of the Apostle and the circumstances of it. We have mention made in this connexion of the light, the voice, and the conversation. These leading circumstances are described in exactly the same way in the three great accounts in the ninth, in the twenty-second, and in the twenty-sixth chapters. There are minute differences between them, but only such differences as are natural between the verbal descriptions given at different times by a truthful and vigorous speaker, who, conscious of honest purpose, did not stop to weigh his every word. All three accounts tell of the light; they all agree on that. St. Paul in his speeches at Jerusalem unhesitatingly declares that the light which he beheld was a supernatural one, above the brightness, the fierce, intolerable brightness of a Syrian sun at midday; and boldly asserts that the attendants and escort who were with him saw the light. Those who disbelieve in the supernatural reject, of course, this assertion, and resolve the light into a fainting fit brought upon Saul by the burning

[1] The question of the site of the conversion is discussed at length in Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., ch. v., p. 49.

heat, or into a passing sirocco blast from the Arabian desert. But the sincere and humble believer may fairly ask, Could a fainting fit or a breath of hot wind change a man who had stood out against Stephen's eloquence and Stephen's death and the witnessed sufferings and patience displayed by the multitudes of men and women whom he had pursued unto the death? But it is not our purpose to discuss these questions in any controversial spirit. Time and space would fail to treat of them aright, specially as they have been fully discussed already in works like Lord Lyttelton on the conversion of St. Paul, wholly devoted to such aspects of these events.[1] But, looking at them from a believer's point of view, we can see good reasons why the supernatural light should have been granted. Next to the life and death and resurrection of our Lord, the conversion of St. Paul was the most important event the world ever saw. Our Lord made to the fiery persecutor a special revelation of Himself in the mode of His existence in the unseen world,

[1] Lord Lyttelton's *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul* is a work now almost unknown to ordinary students of the Bible. It was written in the reign of George II. by the Lord Lyttelton of that day famous as a historian and a poet. Dr. Johnson said of it that it is "a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." It will be found reprinted in a cheap and handy shape by the Religious Tract Society, with a valuable preface by the well-known Henry Rogers. Lord Lyttelton touches upon the subject of the light seen by St. Paul on p. 164, and then adds, "That God should work miracles for the establishment of a most holy religion which, from the insuperable difficulties that stood in the way of it, could not have established itself without such an assistance, is no way repugnant to human reason; but that without any miracles such things (as the light above the brightness of the sun and St. Paul's blindness) should have happened as no adequate natural causes can be assigned for is what human reason cannot believe."

in the reality, truth, and fulness of His humanity, such as He never made to any other human being. The special character of the revelation shows the importance that Christ attached to the person and the personal character of him who was the object of that revelation. Just, then, as we maintain that there was a fitness when there was an Incarnation of God that miracles should attend it; so, too, when the greatest instrument and agent in propagating a knowledge of that Incarnation was to be converted, it was natural that a supernatural agency should have been employed. And then when the devout mind surveys the records of Scripture how similar we see St. Paul's conversion to have been to other great conversions. Moses is converted from mere worldly thoughts and pastoral labours on which his soul is bent, and sent back to tasks which he had abandoned for forty years, to the great work of freeing the people of God and leading them to the Land of Promise; and then a vision is granted, where light, a supernatural light, the light of the burning bush, is manifested. Isaiah and Daniel had visions granted to them when a great work was to be done and a great witness had to be borne, and supernatural light and glory played a great part in their cases.[1] When the Lord was born in Bethlehem, and the revelation of the Incarnate God had to be made to humble faith and lowly piety, then the glory of the Lord, a light from out God's secret temple, shone forth to lead the worshippers to Bethlehem. And so, too, in St. Paul's case; a world's spiritual welfare was at stake, a crisis in the world's spiritual history, a great turning-point in the Divine plan of salvation had arrived, and it was most fitting that the

[1] See Exod. iii., Isa. vi., and Dan. x.

veil which shrouds the unseen from mortal gaze should be drawn back for a moment, and that not Saul alone but his attendants should stand astonished at the glory of the light above the brightness of the sun which accompanied Christ's manifestation.[1]

Then, again, we have the voice that was heard. Difficulties have been also raised in this direction. In the ninth chapter St. Luke states that the attendant escort "heard a voice"; in the twenty-second chapter St. Paul states "they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me." This inconsistency is, however, a mere surface one. Just as it was in the case of our Lord Himself reported in John xii. 28, 29, where the multitude heard a voice but understood not its meaning, some saying that it thundered, others that an angel had spoken, while Christ alone understood and interpreted it; so it was in St. Paul's case; the escort heard a noise, but the Apostle alone understood the sounds, and for him alone they formed articulate words, by him alone was heard

[1] Here it may be well to point out that people should not fancy that their own spiritual experience must necessarily be like St. Paul's. Some persons have troubled themselves because they could not say that they had passed exactly through the same religious feelings and struggles as St. Paul's. But as no two leaves are alike and as no two careers are exactly parallel, so no two spiritual experiences are exactly the same. The true course for any individual to adopt is not to strive and see whether God's dealings with himself and the response which his own spirit has made to the Divine Voice have been exactly like those of others. His true course is rather to strive and ascertain whether he is now really following, obeying, and loving God. He may leave all inquiry as to the methods by which God has guided his soul into the paths of peace to be hereafter resolved in the clear light of eternity. Some God awakens, as He did St. Paul, by an awful catastrophe; others grow up before Him from infancy like Samuel and Timothy; others God gradually changes from sin and worldliness to peace and righteousness, like Jacob of old time

the voice of Him that spake. And the cause of this is explained by St. Paul himself in chapter xxvi., verse 14, where he tells King Agrippa that the voice spake to him in the Hebrew tongue, the ancient Hebrew that is, which St. Paul as a learned rabbinical scholar could understand, but which conveyed no meaning to the members of the temple-police, the servants, and constables of the Sanhedrin who accompanied him.[1] Many other questions have here been raised and difficulties without end propounded, because we are dealing with a region of man's nature and of God's domain, wherewith we have but little acquaintance and to which the laws of ordinary philosophy do not apply. Was the voice which Paul heard, was the vision of Christ granted to him, subjective or objective? is, for instance, one of such idle queries. We know, indeed, that these terms subjective and objective have a meaning for ordinary life. Subjective in such a connexion means that which has its origin, its rise, its existence wholly within man's soul; objective that which comes from without and has its origin outside man's nature. Objective, doubtless, St. Paul's revelation was in this sense. His revelation must have come from outside, or else how do we account for the conversion of the persecuting Sanhedrist, and that in a moment? He had withstood every other influence, and now he yields himself in a moment the

[1] The Rev. Dr. Abbott, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, in a learned work, *Biblical Essays*, lately published, pp. 142 and 146, points out that the lower classes of the Jewish population did not understand the ancient Hebrew, a knowledge of which was in his opinion confined to a few scholars. Cf. also p. 168, where he writes, "It deserves to be noticed that for the vast majority of the Palestinians the Greek Bible was the only one accessible. The knowledge of the ancient Hebrew was confined to a few scholars, in addition to which the Hebrew books were extremely expensive."

lifelong willing captive of Christ when no human voice or argument or presence is near. But then, if asked, how did he see Christ when he was blinded with the heavenly glory? how did he speak to Christ when even the escort stood speechless? we confess then that we are landed in a region of which we are totally ignorant and are merely striving to intrude into the things unseen. But who is there that will now assert that the human eye is the only organ by which man can see? that the human tongue is the only organ by which the spirit can converse? The investigations of modern psychology have taught men to be somewhat more modest than they were a generation or two ago, when man in his conceit thought that he had gained the very utmost limits of science and of knowledge. These investigations have led men to realise that there are vast tracts of an unknown country, man's spiritual and mental nature, yet to be explored, and even then there must always remain regions where no human student can ever venture and whence no traveller can ever return to tell the tale. But all these regions are subject to God's absolute sway, and vain will be our efforts to determine the methods of his actions in a sphere of which we are well-nigh completely ignorant. For the Christian it will be sufficient to accept on the testimony of St. Paul, confirmed by Ananias, his earliest Christian teacher, that Jesus Christ was seen by him,[1] and that a voice was heard for the first time in the silence of

[1] There is nothing about St. Paul's seeing the Lord in the narrative of the conversion in Acts ix. 4-7; but St. Paul asserts that he saw Christ, in his speech before Agrippa, when he represents our Lord as saying (xxvi. 16): "For to this end have I *appeared* unto thee to appoint thee a minister," etc. And again in 1 Cor. xv. 8, "And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He *appeared* to me also"; with

his soul which never ceased to speak until the things of time and sense were exchanged for the full fruition of Christ's glorious presence.

And then, lastly, we have the conversation held with the trembling penitent. St. Luke's account of it in the ninth chapter is much briefer than St. Paul's own fuller statement in the twenty-sixth chapter, and much of it will most naturally come under our notice at a subsequent period. Here, however, we note the expressive fact that the very name by which the future apostle was addressed by the Lord was Hebrew: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me." It is a point that our English translation cannot bring out, no matter how accurate. In the narrative hitherto the name used has been the Greek form, and he has been regularly called Σαῦλος. But now the Lord appeals to the very foundations of his religious life, and throws him back upon the thought and manifestation of God as revealed of old time to His greatest leader and champion under the old covenant, to Moses in the bush; and so Christ uses not his Greek name but the Hebrew, Σαούλ, Σαούλ. Then we have St. Paul's query, "Who art Thou, Lord?" coupled with our Lord's reply, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," or, as St. Paul himself puts it in Acts xxii. 8, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Ancient expositors have well noted the import of this language. Saul asks who is speaking to

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which should be compared the words of Ananias (ix. 17): "The Lord who *appeared* unto thee in the way which thou camest"; and those of Barnabas (ix. 27): "But Barnabas declared unto them how Saul had *seen* the Lord in the way.' The reader would do well to consult Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., ch. iv., p. 50, for a learned note concerning the apparent inconsistencies in the various narratives of the conversion.

him, and the answer is not, The Eternal Word who is from everlasting, the Son of the Infinite One who ruleth in the heavens. Saul would have acknowledged at once that his efforts were not aimed at Him. But the speaker cuts right across the line of Saul's prejudices and feelings, for He says, "I am Jesus of Nazareth," whom you hate so intensely and against whom all your efforts are aimed, emphasizing those points against which his Pharisaic prejudices must have most of all revolted. As an ancient English commentator who lived more than a thousand years ago, treating of this passage, remarks with profound spiritual insight, Saul is called in these words to view the depths of Christ's humiliation that he may lay aside the scales of his own spiritual pride.[1] And then finally we have Christ identifying Himself with His people, and echoing for us from heaven the language and teaching He had used upon earth. "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest" are words embodying exactly the same teaching as the solemn language in the parable of the Judgment scene contained in Matthew xxv. 31-46: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Christ and His people are evermore one; their trials are His trials, their sorrows are His sorrows, their strength is His strength. What marvellous power to sustain the soul, to confirm the weakness, to support and quicken the fainting courage of Christ's people, we find in this expression, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"! They enable us to understand the undaunted spirit which henceforth

[1] See Cornelius à Lapide on Acts ix. 5, quoting from Bede; and St. Chrysostom in Cramer's *Catena*, p. 152, as quoted in Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i., ch. iii., p. 111 (London, 1877).

animated the new convert, and declare the secret spring of those triumphant expressions, "In all these things we are more than conquerors," "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." If Christ in the supra-sensuous world and we in the world of time are eternally one, what matter the changes and chances of earth, the persecutions and trials of time? They may inflict upon us a little temporary inconvenience, but they are all shared by One whose love makes them His own and whose grace amply sustains us beneath their burden. Christ's people faint not therefore, for they are looking not at the things seen, which are temporal, but at the things unseen, which are eternal.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW CONVERT AND HIS HUMAN TEACHER.

"Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth."—ACTS ix. 10, 11.

SAUL of Tarsus was converted outside the city, but the work was only begun there. Christ would put honour upon the work of human ministry, and therefore He directs the stricken sinner to continue his journey and enter into Damascus, where he should be instructed in his future course of action, though Christ Himself might have told him all that was needful. It was much the same on the occasion of the so-called conversion of Cornelius, the pious centurion.[1] The Lord made a revelation to the centurion, but it was only a revelation directing him to send for Peter who should instruct him in the way of salvation. God instituted a human ministry that man might gain light and knowledge by the means and assistance of his brother-man, and therefore in both cases the Lord

[1] Conversion is scarcely a fit word to apply to the Lord's dealings with Cornelius. He had evidently been converted long before the angelic message and Peter's preaching, else whence his prayers and devotion? The Lord simply made by St. Peter a fuller revelation of His will to a soul longing to know more of God.

points the anxious inquirer to men like themselves, who could speak to them in Christ's stead and guide them into fuller knowledge. Why could not Christ have revealed the whole story of His life, the full meaning of His doctrine, without human aid or intervention, save that He wished, even in the very case of the messenger whose call and apostleship were neither by man nor through man, to honour the human agency which He had ordained for the dissemination and establishment of the gospel. If immediate revelation and the conscious presence of God and the direct work of the Spirit could ever have absolved penitent sinners from using a human ministry and seeking direction and help from mortals like themselves, surely it was in the cases of Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius of Cæsarea; and yet in both cases a very important portion of the revelation made consisted in a simple intimation where human assistance could be found.[1]

Saul after the vision rose up from the earth and was led by the hand into Damascus. He was there three days without sight, wherein he neither did eat nor drink. This period of his life and this terrible experience is regarded by many as the time to which may be traced the weakness of eyesight and the delicate vision under which he ever afterwards suffered. The

[1] We should carefully observe, however, that there is a marked difference between the cases of Cornelius and Saul. An angel appeared to Cornelius, Christ Himself to Saul. St. Peter is sent to Cornelius to instruct him in the revelation made by Christ. That revelation was made by Christ Himself to Saul in the vision by the way, during the three days of his blindness, and probably during his stay in Arabia. Ananias was sent to Saul merely to baptize him, and predict his future. "Enter into the city and there it shall be told thee what thou shalt *do*," is our Lord's direction to Saul. St. Paul's knowledge of Christ was neither by man nor through man. His knowledge even about the institution of the sacraments was by immediate revelation: see 1 Cor. xi. 23.

question has often been raised, What was St. Paul's thorn, or rather stake, in the flesh? Various opinions have been hazarded, but that which seems to me most likely to be true identifies the thorn or stake with severe ophthalmia. Six substantial reasons are brought forward by Archdeacon Farrar in defence of this view. (1) When writing to the Galatians St. Paul implies that his infirmity might well have made him an object of loathing to them; and this is specially the case with ophthalmia in the East (see Gal. iv. 14). (2) This supposition again gives a deeper meaning to the Apostle's words to these same Galatians that they would at the beginning of their Christian career have plucked out their eyes to place them at his service (Gal. iv. 15). (3) The term "a stake in the flesh" is quite appropriate to the disease, which imparts to the eyes the appearance of having been wounded by a sharp splinter. (4) Ophthalmia of that kind might have caused epilepsy. (5) It would explain the words "See with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand," as a natural reference to the difficulties the Apostle experienced in writing, and would account for his constant use of amanuenses or secretaries in writing his Epistles, as noted, for instance, in Romans xvi. 22 and implied in 1 Corinthians xvi. 21. (6) Ophthalmia would account for St. Paul's ignorance of the person of the high priest (Acts xxiii. 5).[1] This question has, however, been a moot point since the days of the second century, when Irenæus of Lyons discussed it in his great work against Heresies, book v., ch. iii., and Tertullian suggested that St.

[1] See Tertullian's *De Pudicitia*, § 13, and compare Bishop Lightfoot's *Galatians*, p. 183 note.

Paul's stake in the flesh was simply an exaggerated head-ache or ear-ache.[1]

Let us now, however, turn to the more certain facts brought before us in the words of the sacred narrative. St. Paul was led by the hand into Damascus just as afterwards, on account, doubtless, of the same bodily infirmity dating from this crisis, he "was sent forth to go as far as to the sea," and then "was conducted as far as Athens" (cf. Acts xvii. 10, 14, 15). From this time forth the kindly assistance of friends and companions became absolutely necessary to the Apostle if his footsteps were to be guided aright, and hence it is that he felt solitude such as he endured at Athens a very trying time because he had no sense of security whenever he ventured to walk abroad. He became, in fact, a blind man striving to thread his way through the crowded footpaths of life. The high priest's commissary must then have drawn near to Damascus under very different circumstances from those which fancy pictured for him a few days before. We know not by what gate he entered the city. We only know that he made his way to the house of Judas, where he remained for three days and three nights, with his whole soul so wrapt up in the wonders revealed to him that he had no thoughts for bodily wants and no sense of their demands.

The sacred narrative has been amply vindicated so far as its topographical accuracy is concerned. Saul, as he was led by the hand, instructed his escort to go

[1] See Dr. Farrar's long Excursus X., vol. i., p. 652, in his *Life of St. Paul*, for a discussion of this question. There is a portrait of St. Paul in Lewin's *St. Paul*, ii., 210, which shows him as blear-eyed. It is engraved from a Roman diptych of the fourth century. Lightfoot takes quite another view of the thorn in his *Galatians*, pp. 183-8.

to the house of Judas, a leading man we may be sure among the Jews of Damascus. He dwelt in Straight Street, and that street remains to-day, as in St. Paul's time, a thoroughfare running in a direct line from the eastern to the western gate of the city. Like all Oriental cities which have fallen under Turkish dominion, Damascus no longer presents the stately, well-preserved, and flourishing aspect which it had in Roman times; and, in keeping with the rest of the city, Straight Street has lost a great deal of the magnificent proportions which it once possessed. Straight Street in St. Paul's day extended from the eastern to the western gate, completely intersecting the city. It then was a noble thoroughfare one hundred feet broad, divided by Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, the central one for foot passengers, the side passages for chariots and horses going in opposite directions. It was to a house in this principal street in the city, the habitation of an opulent and distinguished Jew, that the escort brought the blind emissary of the Sanhedrin, and here they left him to await the development of God's purposes.[1]

I. Let us now consider the persons which cluster round the new convert, and specially the agent whom Christ used in the reception of Saul into the Church,

[1] "In the Roman age, and up to the period of the (Mahometan) Conquest, a noble street extended in a straight line from Bab-el-Jabyah (the West gate) to Bab Shurky (the East gate), thus completely intersecting the city. It was divided by Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, of which the central was for foot passengers, and of the others one was used for chariots and horsemen proceeding eastward, and the second for those going in the opposite direction. I have been enabled to trace the remains of the colonnades at various places over nearly one-third of the length of this street. Wherever excavations are made in the line fragments of columns are found *in situ*, at the depth, in

and see what Scripture or tradition tells about them. One man stands prominent; his name was Ananias, a common one enough among the Jews, as the Acts of the Apostles has already shown us, for when we have surveyed the first beginnings of sin and moral failure in the Jerusalem Church we have found that an Ananias with Sapphira his wife was connected therewith.[1] This Ananias of Damascus deserves special attention, for his case reveals to us a good deal of primitive Church history and is connected with many ancient traditions. Let us first strive to gain all the information we can about him from the direct statements of Scripture and the necessary or legitimate deductions from the same. Ananias was a Christian Jew of Damascus. He must have held a leading position in the local Christian Assembly in that city, within five years of the Ascension, for not only did our Lord select him as His agent or medium of communication when dealing with the new convert, but Ananias was well acquainted, by information derived from many persons, with the course of conduct pursued at Jerusalem by Saul, and knew of the commission lately intrusted to him by the high priest. Ananias was probably the head or chief teacher of the local Christian or Nazarene

some places, of ten feet and more below the present surface, so great has been the accumulation of rubbish during the course of ages. There can scarcely be a doubt that this is 'the street called Straight' referred to in the history of the Apostle Paul. Its extreme length is about an English mile, and its breadth must have exceeded 100 feet."—PORTER'S *Damascus*, p. 47.

[1] Josephus, in his *Antiquities*, xx., 23, tells us of an Ananias, a Jewish merchant, who was instrumental in the conversion of Helena, Queen of Adiabene. The name Ananias signifies "Pleasing to God." Ananias was also the name of the messenger who is said to have conveyed the pretended letter of Abgar, King of Edessa, to Christ. See *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, by R. A. Lipsius (Leipsic, 1891), p. 274.

synagogue. At the same time he was also in all probability one of the original company of Jerusalem Christians who had been scattered abroad by the first great persecution. We are told in Acts xi. 19 that "they that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews." Ananias was probably one of these fugitives from Jerusalem who came to Damascus, and there sought refuge from the rage of the destroyer. St. Paul himself tells us of the character which Ananias sustained at Damascus: "He was a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwell there" (ch. xxii. 12). It is the character given of Zacharias, and Elisabeth, and of Simeon. Ananias was, like all the earliest disciples, a rigid observer of the minutest particulars of Jewish ordinances, though he and they alike rested upon Christ alone as their hope of salvation. Further than this, the Scriptures tell us nothing save that we can easily see from the words of the various narratives of the conversion that Ananias was a man of that clear faith, that deep spiritual life which enjoyed perpetual converse with the Unseen. He was not perturbed nor dismayed when Christ revealed Himself. He conversed calmly with the heavenly Visitor, raised his objections, received their solution, and then departed in humble obedience to fulfil the mission committed to him. There is a marvellous strength and power for the man of any age who lives, as Ananias did, with a clear vision of the eternal world constantly visible to the spiritual eye. Life or death, things present or things to come, the world temporal or the world spiritual, all are one to him who lives in the light of God's countenance

and walks beneath the shadow of His wing; for he feels and knows that underneath are the everlasting Arms, and he therefore discharges his tasks with an assured calmness, a quiet dignity, a heavenly strength of which the tempest-tossed and feverish children of time know nothing. Beyond these facts and these traits of character, which we can read between the lines of Holy Scripture, we are told nothing of Ananias.[1] But tradition has not been so reticent. The ancient Church delighted to gather up every notice and every story concerning the early soldiers of the Cross, and Ananias of Damascus was not forgotten. The Martyrologies both of the Greek and Latin Churches give us long accounts of him. They tell that he was born in Damascus, and make him one of the seventy disciples, which is not at all improbable. Then they describe him at one time as bishop, at another time

[1] St. Chrysostom, in his *Homilies on the Acts*, notes the spiritual eminence of this hidden and unknown disciple. In his nineteenth Homily he observes that when St. Philip, one of the seven, was sent to baptize the eunuch, Christ did not appear but merely sent an angel to the evangelist; but Christ Himself appeared to Ananias, and opened out His whole will to him about the future of St. Paul. His conversation with our Lord was, too, that of one accustomed to Divine visitations and communion with Heaven. See Massutius on the Life of St. Paul, p. 107. Massutius was a Jesuit commentator, whose writings are often rich in spiritual suggestiveness. He published his *Vita S. Pauli Apostoli* in 1633. In the first and ninth chapters of the second book he has many acute and learned remarks upon Ananias and his history. The calming effect upon life's fever of spiritual religion and close converse with God is a point often dwelt upon in Scripture. The Old Testament prophets knew this secret of a peaceful life right well. Isaiah often sings of it, as in ch. xii. 2, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid"; in ch. xxvi. 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee"; in ch. xxviii. 16, "He that believeth shall not make haste"; in ch. xl. 31, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up

as a simple presbyter, of the Church at Damascus. They relate his abundant labours at Damascus and in the neighbouring cities, terminating with his martyrdom under a Roman prefect called Lucian.[1] But these details, though they may lend colour to the picture, add nothing of spiritual significance to the information vouchsafed in Scripture.

Judas, into whose house Saul was received, is another person brought before us, upon whom a certain eternity of fame has been bestowed by his temporary connexion with the Apostle. He must have been a man of position and wealth among the Jews of Damascus to receive the official representative and deputy of the high priest. It is possible that he may have been numbered among those early trophies of St. Paul's zeal which he won in the earliest days of his first love, when he "confounded the Jews, proving

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with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Habakkuk proclaims it in ch. iii. 17: "For though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." A strain which St. Paul takes up in his Epistle to the Philippians when he bids them (ch. iv. 6), "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"; to which he adds the promise, not that their requests shall be answered, for that would often be very unfortunate, but the much more consoling one, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." How much calmer and sweeter life would be did Christ's people thus realise their privileges as God's ancient servants did! Ninety per cent. of life's worries and anxieties would thus pass away for ever. Alas! how pagan nominal Christians are in this respect!

[1] See, for both the Greek and Latin stories about **Ananias**, *Acta Sanctorum*, Ed. Bolland., 25 Jan., ii., 613.

that Jesus is Christ." Judas has been by some identified with that Judas who was sent with St. Paul, Silas, and Barnabas as deputies to console the Church at Antioch and restore it to peace when distracted with debates about circumcision (ch. xv. 22).[1]

And now, to conclude this portion of our subject, we may add that the traditional houses, or at least the sites of the houses, of Ananias and Judas, together with the fountain where St. Paul was baptized, were shown in Damascus till the seventeenth century, as Quaresmius, a traveller of that time, tells us that he visited the Straight Street, which is the bazaar, and saw the house of Judas, a large and commodious building, with traces of having been once a church and then a mosque; that he visited the place of baptism, which is not far off, adding withal a ground plan of the house of Ananias. Dean Stanley, however, declares that the traditional house of Judas is not in the street called Straight at all. Let us turn aside from these details, the mere fringes of the story, to the spiritual heart and core thereof.[2]

II. The conversation between Christ and Ananias next claims our attention. Here we may note that it was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who appeared to Ananias, and when appearing makes the most tremendous claims for Himself and allows them when made by Ananias. We are so accustomed to the words of

[1] Judas of Acts xv. 22 is surnamed Barsabbas, as is also Joseph Justus of Acts i. 23. Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.*, on Acts i., conjectures that Judas of Acts xv. may have been the apostle of that name and that Joseph Justus was his brother.

[2] The seventeenth-century travellers in Palestine, Syria, and the East often give us much valuable information. See, on the subject of Damascus, Quaresmius, *Elucidatio Terræ Sanctæ*, t. ii., lib. 7, Peregrinatio 6, cap. 3, with which may be compared Radzivilus, *Peregrinatio*, p. 33, A.D. 1614. See also Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, ch. iii.

the narrative that we do not recognise their bold assumptions and what they imply. The Lord calls Ananias, as He called Samuel of old, and then receives the same answer as Samuel gave, "Behold I am here, Lord." Ananias speaks to Jesus Christ of the disciples, and describes them as "*Thy* saints, who call upon *Thy* name." He knew that prayer to Jesus Christ was practised by them and constituted their special note or mark. Our Lord describes St. Paul "as a chosen vessel unto *Me*, to bear *My name* before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel, for *I* will show him how many things he must suffer for *My name's* sake." While again, when Ananias came into the house of Judas, he is so completely dominated by the idea of Jesus Christ, His presence, His power, His mission, that his words are, "The Lord Jesus hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." In these passages we have a view of primitive Christianity and its doctrine as taught by Christ Himself, by His earliest disciples, and as viewed and recorded by the second generation of Christians, and it is all the same from whatever point it is looked at. The earliest form of Christianity was Christ and nothing else. The personality of Christ dominated every other idea. There was no explaining away the historical facts of His life, there was no watering down His supernatural actions and claims; the Lord Jesus—and His ordinary human name was used—the Lord Jesus, whom the Jews had known as the carpenter's son, and had rejected as the prophet of Nazareth, and had crucified as the pretended king of Israel, He was for Ananias of Damascus the supernatural Being who now ruled the universe, and struck down the persecutor of His people, and sent His messengers and apostles

that they might with Divine power heal the wounded and comfort the broken-hearted. Ananias felt no difficulty in identifying Jesus the despised, the crucified, with the Lord of glory who had appeared to him, upon whose name he called and with whom he communed. Jesus Christ was not for him a dream or a ghost, or a passing appearance, or a distinguished teacher, or a mighty prophet, whose spirit lived with the souls of the good and blessed of every age at rest in paradise. The Jesus of Ananias was no inhabitant or child of earth, no matter how pure and exalted. The Jesus of Nazareth was the Being of beings, who had a just right to call God's people "His saints," and to describe the great work of His messengers and ministers to be that of "bearing His name before the Gentiles," because the Christianity of Ananias and of the earliest Church was no poor, weak, diluted system of mere natural religion regarding Jesus Christ as a Divine prophet, but as nothing more. It theorised not, indeed, about the Incarnation and the modes of the Divine existence. It was too much wrapped up in adoring the Divine manifestations to trouble itself about such questions, which came to the front when love waxed cold and men had time to analyse and debate. For Ananias and for men like him it was sufficient to know that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh. For them and for the earliest Church that one fact embodied the whole of Christianity. Jesus Christ, the same when living in Galilee, suffering in Jerusalem, ascending from Olivet, reigning on the right hand of the Majesty on high, or manifesting Himself to His people, was the beginning and end of all religion.

This is a very important point to insist upon in the present age, when men have endeavoured to represent

the religion of the primitive Church in quite a different light, and to teach that St. Paul was the inventor of that dogmatic system which insists upon the supreme importance and the essential deity of the Person of Jesus Christ. St. Luke's narrative in this passage seems to me quite decisive against such a theory, and shows us how Christianity struck an independent mind like that of Ananias, and how it was taught at a distant Christian Church like Damascus within five or at most seven years after the Ascension of Jesus Christ.[1]

Then, again, we have in the vision granted to Ananias and the revelation made to him a description of Christ's disciples. The description is a twofold one, coming on the one hand from Christ, and on the other from Ananias, and yet they both agree. Ananias describes the religion of Christ when he says, "Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem"; and then he proceeds to identify His "saints" with those that called on Christ's name at Damascus. We have already noted prayer to Christ as a distinguishing feature of His people[2]; but here we find, for the first time in the New Testament, the term "saints" applied to the ordinary followers of Christ, though in a short time it seems to have become the usual designation for the adherents of the crucified Redeemer, as we shall see by a reference to Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; Eph. i. 1, and to numerous other passages scattered throughout the Epistles. Our Lord Himself

[1] Massutius, *loc. cit.*, has a long chapter (book ii., ch. i.) on the date of St. Paul's conversion. See Findlay's *Epistles of St. Paul*, pp. 5, 6, for a concise statement of the arguments concerning it. Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, pp. lxvi. and 253, contains long dissertations upon this point, a simple reference to which must suffice.

[2] See vol. i., pp. 338-41.

sanctions the use of this title, and applies it Himself in a different shape in the fuller account of the divine words given us by St. Paul in his speech before King Agrippa (ch. xxvi. 18). Christ tells St. Paul of his destined work "to turn the Gentiles from darkness to light, that they may receive an inheritance among them which are *sanctified* by faith that is in Me." The followers of Christ were recognised as saints in the true sense of the word saint—that is, as separated, dedicated, consecrated persons, who had been made to drink into one Divine Spirit, had been made partakers of a new life, had been admitted to a kingdom of light and a fellowship of love, and who, by virtue of these blessings, had been cut off from the power of Satan and the kingdom of darkness. And all this had been and ever is to be effected "by faith that is in Christ." Christ's saints or separated people are sanctified by faith in Christ. Not that the bare exercise of a faculty or feeling called faith will exercise a sanctifying influence upon human nature,—this would be simply to make man his own sanctifier, and to usurp for his own poor weak wretched self the work and power which belong to the Holy Ghost alone,—but when Christ is realised as including all the parts of God's final revelation, when no partial or limited view is taken of Christ's work as if it were limited to the Incarnation alone, or the Atonement alone, or the Resurrection alone, but when the diverse and various parts and laws of His revelation are recognised as divinely taught, and therefore as tremendously important for the soul's health. When the Holy Ghost and His mission, and good works and their absolute necessity, and Christ's sacraments and His other appointed means of grace are duly honoured and reverently received, then indeed, and

then alone, faith is truly exercised in Christ, and men are not merely separated by an external consecration, such as the Jews received at circumcision, and which qualified even that hard-hearted and stubborn people to be called a nation of saints; but when Christ is thus truly and fully received by faith into the hearts and affections of His people, they walk worthy of the high vocation called upon them. Many a mistaken exposition has been offered of St. Paul's Epistles, and many an effort has been made to explain away the plainest statements, because men will apply a false meaning to the word saints which Ananias here uses. If we first determine that the word saint could only have been applied to a truly converted man, clothed in the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness, elected from eternity to everlasting salvation, and who could never finally fall away, and then find the term so defined applied, for instance, to the Corinthian Church as a whole, we shall come to some strange results. If truly converted men, true saints of Christ, could be guilty of sins such as were not named amongst the heathen, or could be drunk at the Lord's Table, or could cherish all that long and dreary catalogue of spiritual crimes enumerated in the Corinthian Epistles, then indeed the words true conversion have completely changed their meaning, and Christianity, instead of being the principle and fountain of a regenerate life, becomes a cloak under which all kinds of maliciousness and evil-doing may have free course and be glorified.

Our Lord protests beforehand unto St. Paul against such a perversion of the gospel of free grace with which His great Apostle had all his life to struggle. Antinomianism is as old as St. Paul's doctrine—so very much misunderstood—of justification. Our Lord

raises His voice against it in His earliest commission to St. Paul when He sends him to the Gentiles "to turn them from darkness to light," that is, from moral and spiritual darkness to moral and spiritual light, and "from the power of Satan unto God." And the New Testament often enough tells us what is meant by "the power of Satan." It was not any mere system of false beliefs alone, but it was a wicked, impure belief joined and leading to a wicked and impure practice; and St. Paul's work was to turn the Gentiles from a wicked faith, combined with a still more wicked practice, to a life sanctified and purified and renewed after the image of a living Christ.[1]

III. Finally, we notice in this conversation, and that only very briefly, the title given by our Lord to St. Paul, which became the favourite designation of the Apostle of the Gentiles, especially among the Western doctors of the ancient Church. "Go thy way," says Christ to Ananias, "for he is a chosen vessel unto Me," or, as the Revisers put it in the margin, translating still more literally from the original, "for he is a vessel of election." "Vas

[1] I am referring in this passage to what we may designate the Antinomian method of expounding First Corinthians still current in many circles. They first determine that the word saint is always used by St. Paul to express a truly converted man, one, therefore, in their idea who has no need to ask pardon for sin and who never can finally fall away. They then find this term "saints" applied to the Corinthian Church, which must therefore have been composed of truly converted men alone, else, they think, St. Paul would not have called them saints. But then a difficulty arises, How about the gross sins prevalent in that Church? Their peculiar system of theology, however, rapidly solves this perplexing point. All the sins of believers, past, present or to come, have been forgiven long before they were born, therefore these gross immoralities at Corinth were mere believer's slips, as I have heard them called. A believer guilty of them should be sorry for them as causing scanda to the world, but as far as final salvation is concerned he has nothing to do with them save to assure himself of their pardon

Electionis" is the usual title for St. Paul in St. Jerome's letters, as also in St. Chrysostom's homilies, and it expresses a side of his character which is prominent throughout his writings. Saul's early life was so alienated from Christ, his career had been so completely hostile to the gospel, his conversion had been so entirely God's work and God's work alone, that he ever felt and ever insisted more than the other New Testament writers on God's electing love. If we compare the writings of St. John with those of St. Paul, we shall see how naturally and completely they reflect in their tone the history of their lives. St. John's life was one long continuous steady growth in Divine knowledge. There were no great gaps or breaks in that life, and so we find that his writings do not ignore God's electing love and preventing grace as the source of everything good in man. "We love Him because He first loved us" are words which show that St. John's gospel was at bottom the same as St. Paul's. But St. John's favourite topic is the Incarnation and its importance, and its results in purity of heart and in a sweet consciousness

wrought out by our Lord on the cross. Abundant instances of this method of exposition will be found in the works of Dr. Williams, the Nonconformist of the time of William III., founder of the well-known library in Grafton Street, London. He had a great controversy with the Antinomians of the day, who represented themselves as the true champions of the doctrines of grace. They were simply teaching the ancient Gnostic heresy that the soul can be in communion with God while the body is all the time wallowing in the depths of sin. Precisely the same views are now commonly taught and called as in Williams's day, two hundred years ago, "the Gospel." If, however, we recognise the New Testament use of the word saints as meaning "dedicated to God, consecrated to His service," the meaning of the First Corinthians and of the words of Ananias is quite clear and plain, and no such immoral results follow as the Antinomian exegesis implies, but rather the saintly character of baptized Christians becomes the foundation of the most practical exhortations to holiness of life.

of the Divine Spirit. St. Paul's life, on the other hand, was no continuous upgrowth from youth's earliest day to life's latest eventide. There was a great gap, a tremendous yawning chasm separating the one portion from the other, and Paul never could forget that it was God's choice alone which turned the persecuting Rabbi into the Christian Apostle. His Epistles to the Romans, Ephesians, and Galatians amply testify to the effects of this doctrine upon his whole soul, and show that the expositors of the early Church displayed a true instinct and gauged his character aright when they designated him by this title, "Vas Electionis." And yet the Apostle proved his Divine inspiration, for he held and taught this truth in no one-sided manner. He combined the doctrine of electing love with that of intense human free will and awful personal responsibility. He made no effort intellectually to reconcile the two opposite sides of truth, but, wiser than many who followed him, he accepted both and found in them both, matter for practical guidance. God's eternal and electing love made him humble; man's free will and responsibility made him awfully in earnest. Two passages, drawn from different Epistles, sufficiently explain St. Paul's view. Gal. i. 15, 16—"When it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me"—are words which show how entirely St. Paul viewed himself as a "Vas Electionis." 1 Cor. ix. 27—"I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage, lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected"—are words showing how real and profound was his fear of final defeat and ruin, how convinced he was that no display of Divine grace or love assured him of his own final perseverance. It is

well that people should notice this difference between the tone and spiritual experience of a Paul and of a John. At times sincere Christians have been troubled because their spiritual experience and feelings have been very different from St. Paul's. They have limited to a large extent their own reading of Scripture to his writings, and have not noticed the clear distinction which Scripture makes between the tone and ideas of St. Paul and St. Peter, St. James and St. John; and why? Just to meet this very tendency, and to show us that spiritual experiences, feelings, temptations, must vary with the varying circumstances of each individual. No saintly life can be taken as a universal model or standard; and, above all, the conversion of a persecutor and blasphemer like St. Paul is not to be taken as the normal type of God's dealings with men, who grow up, like St. John or like Timothy, in the paths of Divine love from their earliest childhood.[1]

There is one common feature, however, which can be traced in all religious lives, whether sternly and even violently ordered like Saul's, or gently guided like St. John's. They all agree in presenting one feature when the fresh breath of the Spirit blows upon them and the deeper sense of life's importance first dawns upon the vision, and that is, they are all marked by prayer. Of every sincere seeker the Divine watcher, ever on the outlook for the signs of spiritual life, repeats

[1] It should be carefully noted that the great end of St. Paul's election is set forth by our Lord when speaking to Ananias as "to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel." From the very outset of Paul's Christian career his work as the Apostle of the Gentiles is thus clearly revealed through Ananias. I say *through* Ananias, and not *to* him; for I suppose that Ananias could not himself have realised the real force and meaning of the Divine words.

"Behold, he prayeth." Saul, we may be sure, had never forgotten his duty in the matter of the prescribed round of Jewish devotions; but now for the first time he rose above the level of mere mechanical saying of prayer to spiritual communion with God in Christ; now for the first time he prayed a Christian prayer, through Christ and to Christ; now for the first time perhaps he learned one secret of the spiritual life, which is this, that prayer is something wider and nobler than mere asking. Prayer is communion of the spirit with God reconciled in Christ Jesus. That communion is often deepest and most comforting when enjoyed in simple silence. Saul, the converted persecutor, could know but little yet of what to ask from Christ. But in the revelations made in those hours of darkness and penitence and silence, there were vouchsafed to him renewed proofs of the truths already gained, and of the awful trials which those truths, realised and acted out, would demand from him, "I will show him what things he must suffer for My sake."

CHAPTER IV.

SAUL AND SINAI.

"Saul was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God."—ACTS ix. 19, 20.

WE have bestowed a great deal of attention upon the incidents at Damascus, because the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is more closely connected with the truth and authenticity of Christianity than any other event save those immediately connected with the life and ministry of our Lord Himself. We shall, however, in this chapter, endeavour to discuss the remaining circumstances of it which the Acts of the Apostles brings under our notice.

I. We are told in verse 17 of the visit of Ananias to Saul. "Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." This conversation with Ananias is largely expanded by St. Paul himself in the account which he gives us in Acts xxii., while in his speech to Agrippa in the twenty-sixth chapter he entirely omits all mention of Ananias, and seems to introduce our Lord as the only person who spoke to him, and yet there is no real inconsistency.

St. Paul, in fact, in the latter address is intent on setting vividly before Agrippa the sum total of the revelations made by Christ. He ignores, therefore, every secondary agent. Ananias was Christ's messenger. His words were merely those which Christ put into his mouth. St. Paul goes, therefore, to the root of the matter, and attributes everything, whether uttered by our Lord or by Ananias, to the former alone, who was, indeed, the great Inspirer of every expression, the true Director of every minutest portion of this important transaction.

The ninth chapter, on the other hand, breaks the story up into its component parts, and shows us the various actors in the scene. We see the Lord Jesus consciously presiding over all, revealing Himself now to this person and again to that person. We get a glimpse for a moment behind the veil which Divine Providence throws around His doings and the doings of the children of men. We see Christ revealing Himself now to Saul and then to Ananias, informing the latter of the revelations made to the former; just as He subsequently revealed Himself almost simultaneously to Cornelius at Cæsarea and to Simon Peter at Joppa, preparing the one for the other. The Lord thus hints at an explanation of those simultaneous cravings, aspirations, and spiritual desires which we often find unaccountably arising amid far distant lands and in widely separated hearts. The feelings may seem but vague aspirations and their coincidence a mere chance one, but the typical cases of Saul and Ananias, or of Cornelius and St. Peter, teach the believer to see in them the direct action and government of the Lord Jesus Christ, turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Surely we have an instance of such simultaneous operations of the

Divine Spirit, and that on the largest scale, in the cravings of the world after a Saviour at the age and time when our Lord came! Virgil was then preaching in tones so Christian concerning the coming Saviour whom the world was expecting, that the great Italian poet Dante exempts him from hell on account of his dim but real faith. The Wise Men were then seeking Christ from a far country; Caiaphas was prophesying concerning a man who was to die for God's people. Mankind, all the world over, was unconsciously longing with a divinely inspired desire for that very salvation which God was then revealing; just as upon the narrower stage of Damascus or Cæsarea Jesus Christ inspired Saul and Cornelius with a Divine want and prepared Ananias and Peter to satisfy it. John Keble in his poem for Easter Monday has well seized and illustrated this point, so full of comfort and edification, turning it into a practical direction for the life of the human spirit:—

"Even so the course of prayer who knows?
It springs in silence where it will,
Springs out of sight, and flows
At first a lonely rill.

"Unheard by all but angel ears,
The good Cornelius knelt alone,
Nor dreamed his prayers and tears
Could help a world undone.

"The while upon his terraced roof,
The loved apostle to the Lord,
In silent thought aloof,
For heavenly vision soared.

"The saint beside the ocean prayed,
The soldier in his chosen bower,
Where all his eye surveyed
Seemed sacred in that hour.

"To each unknown his brother's prayer,
Yet brethren true in dearest love
Were they—and now they share
Fraternal joys above."

Ananias, guided by Divine Providence, enters into Saul's presence, states his mission, lays his hands upon him and restores him to sight. Ananias is careful, however, to disclaim all merit so far as he is himself concerned in the matter of this miracle. His language is exactly the same in tone as that of the apostles Peter and John when they had healed the impotent man: "Why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? . . . By faith in His name hath His name made this man strong," were their words to the people. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk," was their command to the man himself. And so in the case of Ananias, he attributes the healing power to Jesus Christ alone. "The Lord Jesus, who appeared unto thee, . . . hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight." The theology and faith of the Church at Damascus were exactly the same as those of the Apostles and Church at Jerusalem. And what a confirmation of Saul's own faith must this miracle have been! It was then no passing vision, no fancy of a heated imagination which he had experienced; but he had the actual proof in his own person of their objective reality, a demonstration that the power of Jesus of Nazareth ordered all things, both in heaven and earth, healing the bodily as it could illuminate the spiritual eye.

II. Ananias restored Saul's sight. According to the ninth of Acts his mission was limited to this one point; but, according to St. Paul's own account in the

twenty-second chapter, he made a much longer communication to the future Apostle: "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for Him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." Ananias predicted to Saul his future mission, his apostleship to all nations, and the fact that the Apostle of the Gentiles would find the root and sustenance of his work in the force of personal conviction with which his miraculous conversion had endowed him. Personal knowledge, individual acquaintance with the things of the eternal world was then, as it is still, the first condition of successful work for Jesus Christ. There may be intellectual power, intense energy, transcendent eloquence, consummate ability; but in the spiritual order these things avail nothing till there be joined thereto that sense of heavenly force and reality which a personal knowledge of the things unseen imparts. Then heart answers to heart, and the great depths of man's nature respond and open themselves to the voice and teaching of one who speaks as St. Paul did of what "he had seen and heard."

There are two points in this address of Ananias as reported by St. Paul himself to which we would direct special attention. Ananias baptized Saul, and used very decided language on the subject, language from which some would now shrink. These two points embody important teaching. Ananias baptized Saul though Christ had personally called him. This shows the importance which the Holy Scriptures attach to baptism, and shows us something too of the nature of

Holy Scripture itself. St. Luke wrote the Acts as a kind of continuation of his Gospel, to give an account to Theophilus of the rise and progress of Christianity down to his own time. St. Luke in doing so tells us of the institution of the Eucharist, but he does not say one word in his Gospel about the appointment of baptism. He does not record the baptismal commission, for which we must turn to St. Matthew xxviii. 19, or to St. Mark xvi. 16. Yet St. Luke is careful to report the baptism of the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost, of the Samaritans, of the eunuch, and now of St. Paul, as afterwards of Cornelius, of Lydia, of the Philippian jailor, and of the Ephesian followers of John the Baptist. He records the universality of Christian baptism, and thus proves its obligation; but he does not give us a hint of the origin of this sacrament, nor does he trace it back to any word or command of the Lord Jesus Christ. He evidently took all these things as quite well known and understood, and merely describes the observance of a sacrament which needed no explanation on his part. The writings of St. Luke were intended to instruct Theophilus in the facts concerning our Lord's life and the labours of certain leading individuals among His earliest followers; but they make no pretence, nor do the other Gospels make any pretence, of being an exhaustive history of our Lord's ministry or of the practice of the earliest Church; and their silence does not necessarily prove that much was not known and practised in the early Church about which they have no occasion to speak.[1] The

[1] Archbishop Whately used to make an important distinction between things *anti*-Scriptural and things *un*-Scriptural. Things *anti*-Scriptural cannot be tolerated by the Church, because they contradict the Word of God. Things *un*-Scriptural, that is, things about which Scripture is

words of Ananias and the obedience of Saul show us the importance which the Holy Spirit attached to this sacrament of baptism. Here was a man to whom Christ Himself had personally appeared, whom Christ had personally called, and to whom He had made long-continued revelations of His will. Yet He instructed him by the mouth of Ananias to receive the sacrament of baptism. Surely if any man was ever exempted from submission to what some would esteem the outward ordinance, it was this penitent and privileged convert! But no: to him the words of God's messenger are the same as to the humblest sinner, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." I have known of truly good men who showed their want of spiritual humility, or perhaps I should rather say of spiritual thought and reflection, in this direction. I have known of persons aroused from religious torpor and death by powerful though one-sided teaching. God has blessed such teaching to the awakening in them of the first elements of spiritual life, and then they have stopped short. They were called, as Saul was, in an unbaptized state. They had never previously received the sacrament of regeneration according to Christ's appointment, and when Christ aroused them they thought this primal blessing quite sufficient, and judged it unnecessary to obey the full commands of Christ and be united by baptism to His

silent and for which no direct warrant can be produced, may be right or wrong, useful or vicious. Sunday schools, for instance, are in this sense unscriptural. The Scriptures are silent about them, and if direct warrant with chapter and verse be required for them, none such can be produced. Hooker, in his Third Book, ch. v.-viii., has a powerful argument upon this subject as against the ultra-reformers or Puritans of his day, who would have tied the Church within much tighter bonds than ever Judaism submitted to.

Body the Church. They judged, in fact, that the blessing of conversion absolved them from the sacrament of responsibility; but such was not the view of the primitive Church. The blessing of conversion as in St. Paul's case, the visible and audible descent of the Holy Ghost as in the case of Cornelius, hindered not the importance nor dispensed with the necessity of the sacrament of baptism, which was the door of admission to the Divine society and to a higher level in the Divine life than any hitherto attained. Persons who act as those misguided individuals of whom we have spoken stop short at the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and they attain to none of its heights, they sound none of its depths, because they bend not their wills, and learn not the sweetness and the power involved in spiritual humiliation and in lowly self-denying obedience taught by the Master Himself when He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[1]

The language, again, of Ananias about baptism sounds strange in some ears, and yet the experience of mis-

[1] I have known cases where baptism was rejected avowedly on these grounds. This is of course a natural result of the pushing individualism in religion to an extreme, and is often found among what we may call extreme Protestants. It naturally results from two errors. First of all, from a rejection of the article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." Such men reject the doctrine of a Church as a great fundamental article of the Creed, one of the necessary articles of the Christian faith, and therefore they reject baptism which is the door of entrance into the Divine society. And, secondly, they reject the true definition and idea of a sacrament. They view baptism, for instance, as the expression merely of a faith already received, and as nothing more. If, then, they express this faith sufficiently by their life and actions, baptism seems to them an empty and vain ceremony But surely this was not St. Paul's view, either when he received baptism at the hands of Ananias, or when he wrote in the sixth of Romans "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death."

sionaries is a sufficient explanation of it. What is that language? "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." These words sound startling to one accustomed to identify the washing away of sin with the exercise of faith, and yet there they stand, and no method of exegesis will avail to make them say anything else than this, that baptism was for Saul the washing away of sin, so that if he did not accept baptism his sins would not have been washed away. The experience, however, of those who labour in the mission field explains the whole difficulty. Baptism is the act of open confession and acknowledgment of Christ. St. Paul himself teaches the absolute importance of this confession: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."[1] Pagan converts are even still abundantly found who are willing to accept the pure morality and the sublime teaching of Christianity, who are willing to believe and see in Jesus Christ the supreme revelation of God made to the human race, but who are not willing to incur loss and persecution and trial for His sake by the reception of Christian baptism and a public confession of their faith. They may believe with the heart in the revelation of righteousness and may lead moral lives in consequence, but they are not willing to make public confession leading them into a state of salvation. They are, in fact, in the position of Saul of Tarsus as he prayed in the house of Judas, but they will go no farther. They will not act as he did, they will not take the decisive step, they will not arise and be baptized and wash away their sins, calling on the name of Jesus Christ. And if Saul of Tarsus had been like them and had acted

[1] Romans x. 10.

as they do, he might have received the vision and have been convinced of the truth of Jesus Christ and of His mission, but yet his moral cowardice would have spoilt the whole, and Saul would have remained in his sins, unpardoned, unaccepted, reprobate from Christ, because he remained unbaptized. Christianity, in fact, is a covenant, and forgiveness of sins is one of the blessings attached to this covenant. Until men perform its conditions and actually enter into the covenant the blessings of the covenant are not granted. Baptism is the door of entry into the covenant of grace, and till men humbly enter within the door they do not exercise true faith. They may believe intellectually in the truth and reality of Christianity, but, till they take the decisive step and obey Christ's law, they do not possess that true faith of the heart which alone enables them, like Saul of Tarsus, to obey Christ and therefore enter into peace.

III. The next step taken by the Apostle is equally plainly stated: "Straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God." But, though the words of the Acts are plain enough, it is not so easy to reconcile them with St. Paul's own account, as given in the Epistle to the Galatians (i. 15, 16, 17), where he states, "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus." In the ninth chapter of the Acts we find the statement made that *immediately* after his baptism he preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, while in his own biographical narrative he tells us that *immediately* after his baptism he went away into Arabia. Is there any way in which we can reconcile them? We think so, and

that a very simple one. Let us first reflect upon the story as told in the Acts. St. Luke is giving a rapid history, a survey of St. Paul's life of public activity. He is not telling the story of his inner spiritual experiences, his conflicts, temptations, trials, revelations, as St. Paul himself set them forth. He knew not of them, in fact. St. Luke knew merely the exterior public life of which man had cognisance. He knew nothing, or but little, of the interior life of the Apostle, known only to himself and to God. St. Luke therefore tells us of his early work at Damascus. St. Paul himself tells us of that early work, but also shows us how he was prepared for that work by his retirement into Arabia. Both agree in the main point, however, and place the scene of his earliest Christian efforts in the very spot, Damascus, which he had in his human prevision destined for himself as the field of his bitterest antagonism to the faith of the Crucified. This is an important point. St. Luke wrote his historical narrative twenty-five years or thereabouts after St. Paul's conversion. He may have often visited Damascus. Tradition makes Antioch, a town of the same district, his birthplace. St. Luke must have had abundant opportunities of consulting witnesses who could tell the story of those eventful days, and could describe St. Paul's earliest testimony to his new convictions. But these men only knew St. Paul as he appeared in public. They may have known very little of the inner history of his life as he reveals it in his Epistle to the Galatians when vindicating his apostolic authority and mission.[1]

[1] St. Luke's informants, twenty-five years after the events, would naturally only remember the leading points, the most striking events of St. Paul's early Christian career. Few people realise how hard it is to

Let us now see whether we cannot harmonise St. Paul's autobiographical narrative in the Epistle with the Evangelist's narrative in the Acts; always remembering, however, that an imperfect knowledge is never more completely felt than in such cases. When we try to harmonise an account written from the subjective side by one individual with an objective and exterior narrative written by some one else, we are like a man looking at a globe and trying to take it all in at one glance. One side must be hidden from him; and so in this case, many circumstances are necessarily concealed from us which would solve difficulties that now completely puzzle us. But let us to our task, in which we have derived much assistance from the commentary of Bishop Lightfoot upon Galatians. St. Paul, we are told in ch. ix. 19, received meat after the visit of Ananias and was strengthened. St. Paul was never one of those high-wrought fanatics who despise food and the care of the body. There was nothing of the Gnostic or the Manichean about him, leading him to despise and neglect the body which the Lord has given to be the soul's instrument. He recognised under all circumstances that if the human spirit is to do its work, and if God's glory is to be promoted, the human body must be sustained in

recall the events of twenty-five years ago in anything like consecutive order. We preserve upon the whole a lively and a true impression; but till we go and consult documents, diaries, journals, etc., it is almost impossible to state the succession of events in accurate order. I was trying the other day to recall the events of my own public life twenty-five years ago anent the controversy which raged about the disestablishment of the Irish Church, into which I plunged with the vehemence of early manhood, and I failed to distinguish events which must have been separated by months and even by years. How much more easily must others have failed accurately to follow details of St. Paul's life known only to himself!

force and vigour. When he was on board ship and in imminent peril of shipwreck and death, and men thought they should be at their prayers, thinking of the next world alone, he took bread and blessed and set the crew and passengers alike the healthy example of eating a hearty meal, and thus keeping his body in due preparation for whatever deliverances the Lord might work for them; and so, too, at Damascus, his spiritual joy and hallowed peace and deep gratitude for his restoration to sight did not prevent him paying due attention to the wants of his body. "He took food, and was strengthened." And now comes the first note of time. "Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway (εὐθέως) he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." The very same expression is used by St. Paul in Galatians, where, after speaking of his conversion, he says, "Immediately (εὐθέως) I conferred not with flesh and blood, but went away into Arabia, and again returned unto Damascus." Now my explanation, and not mine alone, but that of Bishop Lightfoot, is this. After the new convert had rested for a short time at Damascus, he retired into the Sinaitic desert, where he remained for several months, perhaps for a whole year. During this period he disappeared from the sight and knowledge of men as if the earth had opened its mouth and swallowed him. Then he returned to Damascus and preached with such power that the Jews formed a plot against his life, enlisting the help of the governor on their side, so that even the gates were watched that he might be arrested. He escaped their hands, however, through the assistance of his converts, and went up to Jerusalem.[1]

[1] Mr. Lewin, in his *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 72, argues that the governor

But here another difficulty arises. The Acts tells us that "when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple," whereupon Barnabas, fulfilling his office of mediation, explanation, and consolation, took him and introduced him to the Apostles; while on the other hand in the first chapter of Galatians St. Paul himself speaks of his first visit to the Jerusalem Church thus: "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." Now the difficulty consists in this. First, how could the disciples at Jerusalem have been suspicious of St. Paul, if at least a year and a half had elapsed since his conversion? for the Jewish method of counting time would not require three whole years to have elapsed since that event. Secondly, how could Barnabas have brought him to the Apostles as the Acts states, if St. Paul himself says he saw none of them save Peter and James? As to the first difficulty, we acknowledge at once that it seems at first sight a very considerable one, and yet a little reflection will show that there are many explanations of it. If St. Paul kept quiet, as we believe he did, after his conversion and baptism, and departed into the solitudes of Arabia, and then upon his return to Damascus, perhaps

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or ethnarch, as he is called by St. Paul in 2 Cor. xi. 32, was the Jewish chief magistrate of Damascus, appointed to that post by Aretas, King of Petra, who then held Damascus. The Jews were allowed by the Romans to have chief magistrates of their own wherever they lived in large colonies. At Alexandria, for instance, where they occupied a large portion of the city, the Jews were ruled by an Alabarch. Mr. Lewin shows in the same place a picture of the exact spot in the walls where St. Paul is by tradition said to have escaped.

after a year's retirement, began his aggressive work, there may not have been time for the Church at large to get knowledge of the facts. Communication, again, may have been interrupted because of the contest between Herod and Aretas, in which Damascus played no small part. Communication may not have been possible between the two Churches.[1] Then, again, the persecution raised by Saul himself seems to have practically extirpated the Jerusalem Church for a time. "They were all scattered abroad except the Apostles," is the account given of the Christian community at Jerusalem. The terror of that persecution may have lasted many a long month. Numbers of the original members may never have ventured back again to the Holy City. The Jerusalem Church may have been a new formation largely composed of new converts who never had heard of a wondrous circumstance which had happened a year or two before to the high priest's delegate, which the Sanhedrin would doubtless desire to keep secret.[2]

These and many other considerations offer themselves when we strive to throw ourselves back into the circumstances of the time and help to a solution of the first difficulty which we have indicated. Human life is such a complex thing that the strangest combinations may

[1] All thought about Saul and his doings may just then have been swallowed up in the national excitement about Caligula and his attempt to set up his statue in the Temple. The trouble connected with the Nazarene sect would seem to every true Jew but a small matter compared with the outrage to Jehovah threatened by the mad emperor. See more about this in the next chapter.

[2] It is expressly said in Acts ix. 26 that when Saul came to Jerusalem he tried to join himself to the *disciples*. They, knowing only of his record as a persecutor, were afraid of him. Then Barnabas took him and brought him to the *apostles*.

easily find place therein. In this particular case we are so ignorant of the facts, so many hypotheses offer themselves to account for the seeming inconsistencies, that we hesitate not to identify the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in the Acts with that recorded by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians. The second difficulty to which we have alluded is this, How could Barnabas have brought him to the Apostles, if St. Paul himself states that he saw none of the Apostles save Peter and James the Lord's brother? We must remember, however, that St. Luke and St. Paul wrote with two distinct objects. St. Paul, in the Galatians, wished to show the independence of his revelations as regards the Apostles of the circumcision, the Twelve technically so called. Of these Apostles he saw not one, save St. Peter. St. Luke is giving a broad external account of the new convert's earliest religious history, and he tells us that on his first visit to the Holy City his conversion was acknowledged and guaranteed by the apostles,—not the Twelve merely, but the apostles, that is, the senior members of the Christian community, embracing not merely the original company chosen by Christ, but all the senior members of the Church, like Barnabas, James, and others who may have formed a supreme council to guide the affairs of the infant society. The word apostle, in fact, is used very variously in the New Testament; sometimes in a limited sense as confined to the Twelve, sometimes in a wider and more general sense, embracing men like Barnabas, as in Acts xiv. 4, 14; St. James, the Lord's brother, as in 1 Cor. xv. 7; Andronicus and Junias, as in Rom. xvi. 7, and many others. It is quite possible, then, that Barnabas may have brought Saul to the Apostolic council, and told there the tale of his conver-

sion though not one of the original Twelve was present save St. Peter.[1]

We have now endeavoured to explain some of the difficulties which a comparison of St. Paul's own autobiographical narrative with the Acts discloses. Let us look again at the retirement into Arabia. This retirement seems to us full of instruction and pregnant with meaning for the hidden as well as the practical life of the soul. St. Paul as soon as he was baptized retired into Arabia; and why, it may be asked, did he retire thither? Some of the ancient expositors, as St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome, both of whom wrote about the same period, A.D. 400, thought that St. Paul retired into Arabia in order that he might preach to the Arabians. St. Chrysostom, for instance, comments thus: "See how fervent was his soul, he was eager to occupy lands yet untilled. He forthwith attacked a barbarous and savage people, choosing a life of conflict and of much toil." And the explanations of Hilary, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Œcumenius, all of them ancient and acute expositors, are of exactly the same character. Now this would have been a reversal of the Divine order in one important aspect. The power of the keys, the office of opening the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles had been committed to St. Peter by Jesus Christ. He had not as yet baptized Cornelius, and thus formally opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. If St. Paul had preached to the Arabians, he would have usurped St. Peter's place and function. We believe, on the other hand, that God led

[1] See Bishop Lightfoot's dissertation upon St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, and the use of the term apostle in the New Testament in his *Commentary on Galatians*, pp. 91-101. Cf. Volume I. of this Commentary, p. 348.

the converted persecutor into the deserts of Arabia for very different purposes. Let us note a few of them.

The Lord led Saul there for the purpose of quiet and retirement. The great commentators and expositors of the early Church, as we have already noted, used to call St. Paul by the special title of "Vas Electionis," the chosen vessel *par excellence*, chosen because surpassing in his gifts and graces and achievements all the other Apostles. Now it was with the "Vas Electionis" in the New Testament as with many of his types in the Old Testament. When God would prepare Moses for his life's work in shepherding, ruling, and guiding His people through the deserts of Arabia, He first called him for many a long day into retirement to the Mount of Horeb and the solitudes of the Sinaitic desert. When God would strengthen and console the spirit depressed, wounded and severely smitten, of his servant Elijah, He brought him to the same mysterious spot, and there restored his moral and spiritual tone, and equipped him with new strength for his warfare by the visions of the Almighty lovingly vouchsafed to him. The Founder or Former of the Jewish Dispensation and the Reformer of the same Dispensation were prepared and sustained for their work amid the solitudes of the Arabian deserts; and what more fitting place in which the "Vas Electionis," the chosen vessel of the New Dispensation, should be trained? What more suitable locality where the Lord Jesus should make those fuller and completer revelations of Christian doctrine and mystery which his soul needed, than there where lightning-blasted cliff and towering mountains all alike spoke of God and of His dealings with mankind in the mysterious ages of a

long-departed past? The Lord thus taught St. Paul, and through him teaches the Church of every age, the need of seasons of retirement and communion with God preparatory to and in close connexion with any great work or scene of external activity, such as St. Paul was now entering upon. It is a lesson much needed by this age of ours when men are tempted to think so much of practical work which appears at once in evidence, making its presence felt in tangible results, and so very little of devotional work and spiritual retirement which cannot be estimated by any earthly standard or tabulated according to our modern methods. Men are now inclined to think *laborare est orare*, and that active external work faithfully and vigorously rendered can take the place and supply the want of prayer and thought, of quiet study and devout meditation. Against such a tendency the Lord's dealings with St. Paul, yea more, the Divine dealings with and leadings of the eternal Son Himself, form a loud and speaking protest. The world was perishing and men were going down to the grave in darkness and Satan and sin were triumphing, and yet Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days, and Saul was brought out into the deserts of Arabia from amid the teeming crowds of Damascus that he might learn those secrets of the Divine life which are best communicated to those who wait upon God in patient prayer and holy retirement. This is a lesson very necessary for this hot and fitful and feverish age of ours, when men are in such a hurry to have everything set right and every abuse destroyed all at once. Their haste is not after the Divine model, and their work cannot expect the stability and solidity we find in God's. The nineteenth-century extreme is reproved by St. Paul's

retirement into Arabia.[1] Man is, however, such a creature that if he avoids one extreme he generally tumbles into another. And so it is in this matter. Men have been ready to push this matter of retirement into an extreme, and have considered that they were following St. Paul's example in retiring into the Arabian and similar deserts and remaining there. But they have made a great mistake. St. Paul retired into Arabia for a while, and then "returned again unto Damascus." They have retired into the deserts and have remained there engaged in the one selfish task of saving their own souls, as they thought, by the exercises of prayer and meditation, apart from that life of active good works for the sake of others which constitutes another department of Christianity equally vital to the health of the soul.

[1] We may apply this typical fact in primitive Church history in a very modern direction. It would be very well if candidates for the sacred ministry always imitated St. Paul's departure into Arabia. I have known a great many promising careers spoiled because young deacons would select a heavy, laborious town or city charge for the opening work of their ministry. They know nothing of life or the world. They know nothing of preaching or pastoral work. They have, too, all their mistakes to make, and they select the most public place for their perpetration. But this is not the worst. They form habits of busy idleness and of mental dissipation which never leave them. The first two or three years of a young clergyman's life generally determine his whole career. His life never recovers the effect of the initial movement. I think the great outcry, in the Church of England at least, against sermons largely owing to the decay of study resulting from premature activity on the part of the junior clergy. Premature development in any direction is ever followed by premature decay, and when a young priest or deacon is engaged every day and every night in the week from an early service at 8 a.m. till night-school is finished at 10 p.m. in external work, how can he prepare for teaching an educated congregation on Sundays? And surely there ought to be some little consideration for thinking men and educated women as well as for others.

The history of Eastern monasticism is marked from its earliest days by an eager desire to follow St. Paul in his retirement into Arabia, and an equal disinclination to return with him unto Damascus. And this characteristic, this intense devotion to a life of solitude strangely enough passed over to our own Western islands, and is a dominant feature of the monasticism which prevailed in Great Britain and Ireland in the days of Celtic Christianity. The Syrian and Egyptian monks passed over to Lerins and Southern Gaul, whence their disciples came to England and Ireland, where they established themselves, bringing with them all their Eastern love of solitary deserts. This taste they perpetuated, as may be seen especially on the western coast of Ireland, where the ruins of extensive monastic settlements still exist, testifying to this craving. The last islands, for instance, which a traveller sees as he steams away from Cork to America, are called the Skelligs. They are ten miles west of the Kerry coast, and yet there on these rocks where a boat cannot land sometimes for months together the early monks of the fifth and six centuries established themselves as in a desert in the ocean. The topography of Ireland is full of evidences and witnesses of this desire to imitate the Apostle of the Gentiles in his Arabian retirement. There are dozens of town lands—subdivisions of the parishes—which are called deserts or diserts,[1] because they constituted solitudes set apart for hermit life after the example of St. Paul in Arabia and John the Baptist in the deserts of Judæa. While, again, when we turn northwards along the western seaboard of Ireland, we shall find numerous islands

[1] See Joyce's *Irish Names of Places*, vol. i., p. 325.

like the Skelligs, Ardoilen or the High Island, off the coast of Connemara, and Innismurry off the Sligo coast, where hermit cells in the regular Egyptian and Syrian fashion were built, and still exist as they did a thousand years ago, testifying to the longing of the human mind for such complete solitude and close communion with God as Saul enjoyed when he departed from Damascus.[1] The monks of ancient times may have run into one extreme: well would it be for us if we could avoid the other, and learn to cultivate self-communion, meditation, self-examination, and that realisation of the eternal world which God grants to those who wait upon Him apart from the bustle and din and dust of earth, which clog the spiritual senses and dim the heavenly vision.

We can see many other reasons why Paul was led into Arabia. He was led there, for instance, that he might make a thorough scrutiny of his motives. Silence, separation, solitude, have a wondrous tendency to make a man honest with himself and humbly honest before his God. Saul might have been a hypocrite or a formalist elsewhere, where human eyes and jealous glances were bent upon him, but scarcely when there alone with Jehovah in the desert. Again, Saul was led

[1] I have touched upon the subject of the connexion between Syria and Egypt and Oriental monasticism on the one hand, and Gaul, England, and Ireland on the other, during the period which elapsed between A.D. 400 and 900, in *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, chs. ix. and xi. I have discussed it at greater length and with fuller details in two papers upon the Knowledge of Greek in Gaul and Ireland, read before the Royal Irish Academy in February 1892, now published in the Proceedings of that body; and also in two papers, one upon the Island Monasteries of Great Britain and Ireland and the other on St. Fechin of Fore, published, the former in the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland for 1891, and the latter in the same Journal for April 1st, 1892.

there that his soul might be ennobled and enlarged by the power of magnificent scenery, of high and hallowed associations. Mountain and cliff and flood, specially those which have been magnified and made honourable by grand memories such as must have crowded upon Saul's mind, have a marvellous effect, enlarging, widening, developing, upon a soul like Saul's, long cribbed, cabined, and confined within the rigorous bonds of Pharisaic religionism. Saul, too, was led up into those mysterious regions away from the busy life and work, the pressing calls of Damascus, that he might speak a word in season to us all, and especially to those young in the Christian life, who think in the first burst of their zeal and faith as if they had nothing to do but go in and possess the whole land. Saul did not set out at once to evangelise the masses of Damascus, or to waste the first weak beginnings of his spiritual life in striving to benefit or awaken others. He was first led away into the deserts of Arabia, in order that there he might learn of the deep things of God and of the weak things of his own nature, and then, when God had developed his spiritual strength, He led him back to Damascus that he might testify out of the fulness of a heart which knew the secrets of the Most High. The teaching of Saul's example speaks loudly to us all. It was the same with Saul as with a greater than he. The Eternal Son Himself was trained amid years and years of darkness and secrecy, and even after His baptism the day of His manifestation unto Israel was delayed yet a little. Jesus Christ was no novice when He came preaching. And Saul of Tarsus was no novice in the Christian life when he appeared as the Christian advocate in the synagogue of Damascus. Well would it have been for many a

soul had this Divine example been more closely copied. Again and again have the young and ignorant and inexperienced been encouraged to stand up as public teachers immediately after they have been seriously impressed. They have yielded to the unwise solicitation. The vanity of the human heart has seconded the foolish advice given to them, and they have tried to declare the deep things of God when as yet they have need of learning the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Is it any wonder that such persons oftentimes make shipwreck of faith and a sound conscience? Truth is very large and wide and spacious, and requires much time and thought if it is to be assimilated; and even when truth is grasped in all its mighty fulness, then there are spiritual enemies within and without and spiritual pitfalls to be avoided which can be known only by experience. Woe is then to that man who is not assisted by grace and guided by Divine experience, and who knows not God and the powers of the world to come, and the devious paths of his own heart, as these things can only be known and learned as Saul of Tarsus knew and learned them in the deserts of Arabia. There was marvellous wisdom contained in the brief apostolic law enacted for candidates for holy orders in words gathered from St. Paul's own personal history, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERT.

"Now there was a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side."—ACTS x. 1-6.

WE have now arrived at another crisis in the history of the early Church of Christ. The Day of Pentecost, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the call of Cornelius, and the foundation of the Gentile Church of Antioch are, if we are to pick and choose amid the events related by St. Luke, the turning-points of the earliest ecclesiastical history. The conversion of St. Paul is placed by St. Luke before the conversion of Cornelius, and is closely connected with it. Let us then inquire by what events St. Luke unites the two. German commentators of the modern school, who are nothing unless they are original, have not been willing to allow that St. Luke's narrative is continuous. They have assigned various dates to the conversion of Cornelius. Some have made it precede the conversion of St. Paul, others have fixed it to the

time of Paul's sojourn in Arabia, and so on, without any other solid reasons than what their own fancies suggest. I prefer, however, to think that St. Luke's narrative follows the great broad outlines of the Christian story, and sets forth the events of the time in a divinely ordered sequence. At any rate I prefer to follow the course of events as the narrative suggests them, till I see some good reason to think otherwise. I do not think that the mere fact that the sacred writer states events in a certain order is a sufficient reason to think that the true order must have been quite a different one. Taking them in this light they yield themselves very naturally to the work of an expositor. Let us reflect then upon that sequence as here set forth for us.

Saul of Tarsus went up to Jerusalem to confer with St. Peter, who had been hitherto the leading spirit of the apostolic conclave. He laboured in Jerusalem among the Hellenistic synagogues for some fifteen days. A conspiracy was then formed against his life. The Lord, ever watchful over His chosen servant, warned him to depart from Jerusalem, indicating to him as he prayed in the Temple the scope and sphere of his future work, saying, "Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles" (see Acts xxii. 21). The Christians of Jerusalem, having learned the designs of his enemies, conveyed Saul to Cæsarea, the chief Roman port of Palestine, whence they despatched him to Cilicia, his native province, where he laboured in obscurity and quietness for some time. St. Peter may have been one of the rescue party who saved Saul from the hands of his enemies escorting him to Cæsarea, and this circumstance may have led him to the western district of the country. At

any rate we find him soon after labouring in Western Palestine at some distance from Jerusalem. Philip the Evangelist had been over the same ground a short time previously, and St. Peter may have been sent forth by the mother Church to supervise his work and confer that formal imposition of hands which from the beginning has formed the completion of baptism, and seems to have been reserved to the Apostles or their immediate delegates. Peter's visit to Western Palestine, to Lydda and Sharon and Joppa, may have been just like the visit he had paid some time previously, in company with St. John, to the city of Samaria, when he came for the first time in contact with Simon Magus. St. Luke gives us here a note of time helping us to fix approximately the date of the formal admission of Cornelius and the Gentiles into the Church. He mentions that the Churches then enjoyed peace and quietness all through Palestine, enabling St. Peter to go upon his work of preaching and supervision. It may perhaps strike some persons that this temporary peace must have been attained through the conversion of Saul, the most active persecutor. But that event had happened more than two years before, in the spring of 37 A.D., and, far from diminishing, would probably have rather intensified the hostility of the Jewish hierarchy. It was now the autumn of the year 39, and a bitter spirit still lingered at Jerusalem, as Saul himself and the whole Church had just proved. External authorities, Jewish and Roman history, here step in to illustrate and confirm the sacred narrative.

The Emperor Caius Caligula, who ascended the throne of the empire about the time of Stephen's martyrdom, was a strange character. He was wholly

self-willed, madly impious, utterly careless of human life, as indeed unregenerate mankind ever is. Christianity alone has taught the precious value of the individual human soul the awful importance of human life as the probation time for eternity, and has thereby ameliorated the harshness of human laws, the sternness of human rulers, ready to inflict capital punishment on any pretence whatsoever. Caligula determined to establish the worship of himself throughout the world. He had no opposition to dread from the pagans, who were ready to adopt any creed or any cult, no matter how degrading, which their rulers prescribed. Caligula knew, however, that the Jews were more obstinate, because they alone were conscious that they possessed a Divine revelation He issued orders, therefore, to Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria, Palestine, and the East, to erect his statue in Jerusalem and to compel the Jews to offer sacrifice thereto. Josephus tells us of the opposition which the Jews offered to Caligula; how they abandoned their agricultural operations and assembled in thousands at different points, desiring Petronius to slay them at once, as they could never live if the Divine laws were so violated. The whole energies of the nation were for months concentrated on this one object, the repeal of the impious decree of Caligula, which they at last attained through their own determination and by the intervention of Herod Agrippa, who was then at Rome.[1]

[1] See the whole story told at length in Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book XVIII., ch. viii., 8, and in his *Wars*, Book II., ch. x. This story, which is little known to Bible students, is most interesting. It fully explains the repose from persecution which the Church enjoyed at the time of the conversion of Cornelius and helps us to fix its date. In the year 39 Petronius, the prefect of Syria, received orders from the Emperor Caligula to set up his statue as a god in the Temple. He advanced to

It was during this awful period of uncertainty and opposition that the infant Church enjoyed a brief period of repose and quiet growth, because the whole nation from the high priest to the lowest beggar had something else to think of than how to persecute a new sect that was as yet rigorously scrupulous in observing the law of Moses. During this period of repose from persecution St. Peter made his tour of inspection "throughout all parts," Samaria, Galilee, Judæa, terminating with Lydda, where he healed, or at least

fulfil the Emperor's command with two legions and a number of auxiliary troops, and came as far as Ptolemais, a maritime town of Galilee, which is mentioned in Acts xxi. 7 as a place where St. Paul visited a Church, of which we hear nothing else. The Jewish nation met the prefect there in tens of thousands, entreating him to desist or else to put them to immediate death. He halted his army and appointed a further conference at Tiberias, where the people met him and continued their entreaties for fifty days, though it was seed-time and a famine might result from their neglect of the spring operations. Petronius suspended his operations for the time, and wrote back to the Emperor an account of the Jewish opposition. Herod Agrippa too, who was then at Rome and in high favour with the Emperor, lent his assistance, and obtained a temporary respite for the Jews by a timely and expensive banquet which he prepared for him. Towards the close of A.D. 40 Caligula, however, determined to set out and personally compel the obedience of the Jews. But his assassination in January 41 relieved their apprehensions, and freed the world from Caligula's mad freaks. During that period of anxiety, lasting fully a year and a half, the Jews had neither time nor thought for the new sect, which was opposed as strongly as themselves to the Emperor's impious projects and whose members doubtless flung themselves as heartily into the opposition. The Jews at Alexandria suffered at the same time a terrible persecution, of which Philo and Josephus tell: see Mommsen's *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii., pp. 190-96 (Dickson's Translation). This is one of those incidental touches which prove the wonderful accuracy of this book of the Acts. Dr. Lightfoot has remarked (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*) that no book of the Bible has so many points of contact with current history and politics as the Acts, and can therefore be more easily tested. This special case is an interesting illustration of the learned bishop's view.

prayed for the healing of, Æneas,[1] and with Joppa, where his prayer was followed by the restoration of Tabitha or Dorcas, who has given a designation now widely applied to the assistance which devout women can give to their poorer sisters in Christ.

We thus see how God by the secret guidance of His Spirit, shaping his course by ways and roads known only to Himself, led St. Peter to the house of Simon the tanner, where he abode many days waiting in patience to know God's mind and will which were soon to be opened out to him. We have now traced the line of events which connect the conversion of Saul of Tarsus with that of Cornelius the centurion of Cæsarea. Let us apply ourselves to the circumstances surrounding the latter event, which is of such vital importance to us Gentile Christians as having been the formal Divine proclamation to the Church and to the world that the mystery which had been hid for ages was now made manifest, and that the Gentiles were spiritually on an equality with the Jews. The Church was now about to burst the bonds which had restrained it for five years at least. We stand by the birth of European Christendom and of modern civilisation. It is well, then, that we should learn and inwardly digest every, even the slightest, detail concerning such a transcendent and notable crisis. Let us take them briefly one by one as the sacred narrative reports them.

I. I note, then, in the first place that the *time* of this conversion was wisely and providentially chosen. The time was just about eight years after the Ascension and

[1] Perhaps it is well to note that this is not the classical word Æneas, which in Greek would be represented by Αἰνείας, but a different name with a short *e*, and is written in Greek Αἰνέας. The latter is found in Thucydides and Xenophon: see Meyer *in loco*.

the foundation of the Church. Time enough therefore had elapsed for Christianity to take root among the Jews. This was most important. The gospel was first planted among the Jews, took form and life and shape, gained its initial impulse and direction among God's ancient people in order that the constitution, the discipline, and the worship of the Church might be framed on the ancient Jewish model and might be built up by men whose minds were cast in a conservative mould. Not that we have the old law with its wearisome and burdensome ritual perpetuated in the Christian Church. That law was a yoke too heavy for man to bear. But, then, the highest and best elements of the old Jewish system have been perpetuated in the Church. There was in Judaism by God's own appointment a public ministry, a threefold public ministry too, exercised by the high priest, the priests, and the Levites. There is in Christianity a threefold ministry exercised by bishops, presbyters or elders, and deacons.[1] There were in Judaism public and consecrated sanctuaries, fixed liturgies, public reading of God's Word, a service of choral worship, hymns of joy and thanksgiving, the sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism in a rudimentary shape; all these were transferred from the old system that was passing away into the new system that was taking its place. Had the Gentiles been admitted much earlier all this might not have so easily happened. Men do not easily change

[1] I do not intend to raise any disputed question as to Church polity and government in this book, and so I may point out, without compromising my own views in the least, that even a Presbyterian may agree in this statement, as he may hold that his own teaching elder or minister corresponds to the primitive bishop, his ruling elders to the presbyters, and his own deacons to the ancient deacons. Presbyterianism claims thus a threefold ministry as well as Episcopacy.

their habits. Habits, indeed, are chains which rivet themselves year by year with ever-increasing power round our natures; and the Jewish converts brought their habits of thought and worship into the Church of Christ, establishing there those institutions of prayer and worship, of sacramental communion and preaching which we still enjoy. But we must observe, on the other hand, that, had the Gentiles been admitted a little later, the Church might have assumed too Jewish and Levitical an aspect. This pause of eight years, during which Jews alone formed the Church, is another instance of those delays of the Lord [1] which, whether they happen in public or in private life, are always found in the long run to be wise, blessed, and providential things, though for a time they may seem dark and mysterious, according to that ancient strain of the Psalmist, "Wait on the Lord, . . . and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, upon the Lord." [2]

II. Again, the *place* where the Church burst its Jewish shell and emerged into full gospel freedom is noteworthy. It was at Cæsarea. It is a great pity that people do not make more use of maps in their study of

[1] What a fine subject for historical study the delays of the Lord would prove. The delay of the Incarnation till the world was ready is a supreme instance of them. The delay of the triumph of Christianity, of the break up of the Roman Empire, of the Reformation so often attempted but never effected till the invention of printing and the revival of learning,—these and numerous other illustrations fling light upon the darkness which still surrounds the Divine methods and dispensations amid which we live.

[2] This and several other thoughts in this chapter will be found worked out in a sermon of Bishop Jebb, a well-known preacher of the last generation who is now almost forgotten. Yet he published several volumes of sermons and other theological works, which had no small influence in laying the foundations of the Oxford movement. His sermons are full of matter, though not composed in a modern style.

Holy Scripture. Sunday evenings are often a dull time in Christian households, and the bare mechanical reading of Scripture and of good books often only makes them duller. How much livelier, interesting, and instructive they would be were an attempt made to trace the journeys of the apostles with a map, or to study the scenes where they laboured—Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Damascus, Ephesus, Athens, and Rome—with some of the helps which modern scholarship and commercial enterprise now place within easy reach. I can speak thus with the force of personal experience, for my own keen interest in this book which I am expounding dates from the Sunday evenings of boyhood thus spent, though without many of the aids which now lie within the reach of all. This is essentially the modern method of study, especially in matters historical. A modern investigator and explorer of Bible sites and lands has well expressed this truth when he said, "Topography is the foundation of history. If we are ever to understand history, we must understand the places where that history was transacted."[1] The celebrated historians the late Mr. Freeman and Mr. Green worked a revolution in English historical methods by teaching people that an indefatigable

This cannot be wondered at when we find from his well-known correspondence with Alexander Knox that a single sermon sometimes was the work of several months, if not even years. The leisurely character of even busy lives in the opening years of this century is strikingly illustrated by the correspondence between these learned men. Bishop Jebb preached a sermon in 1804 on the well-known Vincentian rule of faith, "Quod semper, quod ubique, etc." This sermon he elaborated till 1815, and then published it. It played no small part in religious controversies between 1815 and 1840, as a reference to the *Christian Observer*, the *Christian Examiner*, and other religious periodicals of that time will show.

[1] See Ramsay's *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, pp. 51, 52.

use of maps and a careful study of the physical features of any country are absolutely needful for a true conception of its history. In this respect at least secular history and sacred history are alike. Without a careful study of the map we cannot understand God's dealings with the Church of Christ, as is manifest from the case of Cæsarea at which we have arrived. The narratives of the Gospels and of the Acts will be confused, unintelligible, unless we understand that there were two Cæsareas in Palestine, one never mentioned in the Gospels, the other never mentioned in the Acts. Cæsarea Philippi was a celebrated city of North-eastern Palestine. It was when our Lord was within its borders that St. Peter made his celebrated confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," told of in St. Matthew xvi. 13-16. This is the only Cæsarea of which we hear in the Gospels. It was an inland town, built by the Herods in joint honour of themselves and of their patrons the Emperors of Rome, and bore all the traces of its origin. It was decorated with a splendid pagan temple, was a thoroughly pagan town, and was therefore abhorred by every true Jew. There was another Cæsarea, the great Roman port of Palestine and the capital, where the Roman governors resided. It was situated in the borders of Phœnicia, in a north-westerly direction from Jerusalem, with which it was connected by a fine military road.[1] This Cæsarea had been originally built

[1] The most detailed account of Cæsarea-on-the-Sea, its ruins and present state, will be found in the *Memoirs* of the Survey of Western Palestine, vol. ii., pp. 13-29. It is accompanied with plans and maps, which show that ancient Roman Cæsarea was ten times the size of the mediæval city which the Crusaders occupied. Geikie's *The Holy Land and the Bible*, ch. iv., gives a very interesting account of the ancient and modern state of Cæsarea.

by Herod the Great. He spent twelve years at this undertaking, and succeeded in making it a splendid monument of the magnificence of his conceptions. The seaboard of Palestine is totally devoid to this day of safe harbours. Herod constructed a harbour at vast expense. Let us hear the story of its foundation in the very words of the Jewish historian. Josephus tells us that Herod, observing "that Joppa and Dora are not fit for havens on account of the impetuous south winds which beat upon them, which, rolling the sands which come from the sea against the shores, do not admit of ships lying in their station; but the merchants are generally there forced to ride at their anchors in the sea itself. So Herod endeavoured to rectify this inconvenience, and laid out such a compass toward the land as might be sufficient for a haven, wherein the great ships might lie in safety; and this he effected by letting down vast stones of above fifty feet in length, not less than eighteen in breadth and nine in depth, into twenty fathoms deep."[1] The Romans, when they took possession of Palestine, adopted and developed Herod's plans, and established Cæsarea on the coast as the permanent residence of the procurator of Palestine. And it was a wise policy. The Romans, like the English, had a genius for government. They fixed their provincial capitals upon or near the sea-coast that their communications might be ever kept open. Thus in our own case Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Capetown, Quebec, and Dublin are all seaport towns. And so in ancient times Antioch, Alexandria, Tarsus, Ephesus, Marseilles,

[1] See Josephus, *Antiquities*, XV. ix. 6; *Wars of Jews*, I. xxi. Mr. Lewin, in his *Life of St. Paul*, vol. ii., ch. iv., spends several pages in an elaborate discussion of the buildings and plan of Cæsarea, to which it must here suffice to refer.

Corinth, London, were all seaports and provincial Roman capitals as Cæsarea was in Palestine. And it was a very wise policy. The Jews were a fierce, bold, determined people when they revolted. If the seat of Roman rule had been fixed at Jerusalem, a rebellion might completely cut off all effective relief from the besieged garrison, which would never happen at Cæsarea so long as the command of the sea was vested in the vast navies which the Roman State possessed. Cæsarea was to a large extent a Gentile city, though within some seventy miles of Jerusalem. It had a considerable Jewish population with their attendant synagogues, but the most prominent features were pagan temples, one of them serving for a lighthouse and beacon for the ships which crowded its harbour, together with a theatre and an amphitheatre, where scenes were daily enacted from which every sincere Jew must have shrunk with horror. Such was the place—a most fitting place, Gentile, pagan, idolatrous to the very core and centre —where God chose to reveal Himself as Father of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and showed Christ's gospel as a light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel.

III. Then, again, the *person* chosen as the channel of this revelation is a striking character. He was "Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band."[1] Here, then, we note first of all that

[1] Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian band. This is another of the accidental coincidences which attest the genuineness of the Acts. The Roman army was divided into two broad divisions, the legions and the auxiliary forces. Now the legions were never permanently quartered in Palestine till the great war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, which began in A.D. 66 and ended in A.D. 70. A legion was then for the first time stationed with a fixed camp upon the site of the Holy City: see Mommsen's *Roman Provinces*, ii. 218. The auxiliary forces

Cornelius was a Roman soldier. Let us pause and reflect upon this. In no respect does the New Testament display more clearly its Divine origin than in the manner in which it rises superior to mere provincialism. There are no narrow national prejudices about it like those which nowadays lead Englishmen to despise other nations, or those which in ancient times led a thorough-going Jew to look down with sovereign contempt on the Gentile world as mere dogs and outcasts. The New Testament taught that all men were equal and were brothers in blood, and thus laid the founda-

were a kind of militia raised upon the spot. Palestine was made a province of the second rank in A.D. 6, and from that time to the year 66 was garrisoned, like all second-rank provinces, exclusively by auxiliary troops, the headquarters of which were at Cæsarea. These auxiliaries, recruited amongst the Samaritans and Syrian Greeks, numbered one ala and five cohorts, about three thousand men: see Mommsen, *loc. cit.*, p. 186. It would not have been prudent, however, to have a garrison in Palestine exclusively composed of troops locally recruited, even though restricted to Samaritans and Syrians, just as no prudent English government would garrison Ireland with a militia drawn from Ulster Orangemen alone. The Roman Government therefore mingled with the garrison of Cæsarea an auxiliary cohort composed of Italians. There were thirty-two Italian auxiliary cohorts which were thus used as a salutary precaution against treachery on the part of the local militia. See, on this interesting point, Marquardt, *L'Organisation Militaire chez les Romains*, p. 189 (French Edition), where this learned German writer often quotes the Acts of the Apostles to illustrate the military arrangements in Palestine during the first sixty years of the first century. Such was the military organisation of Palestine from A.D. 6 to 66. After that period Palestine was ruled in the sternest military manner, and treated like a border province subject to martial law with legionaries scattered all over it. Now if the Acts were written in the beginning of the second century, a writer would almost certainly have missed the correct description of the troops stationed at Cæsarea as St. Luke gives it in this passage. See also the article "Exercitus" in the new edition of Smith's *Dictionary of Roman and Greek Antiquities*; Mommsen, on the Roman Legions, in *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, vol. v. and Pfitzner, *Geschichte der Römischen Kaiserlegionen*.

tions of those modern conceptions which have well-nigh swept slavery from the face of civilised Christendom. The New Testament and its teaching is the parent of that modern liberalism which now rules every circle, no matter what its political designation. In no respect does this universal catholic feeling of the New Testament display itself more clearly than in the pictures it presents to us of Roman military men. They are uniformly most favourable. Without one single exception the pictures drawn for us of every centurion and soldier mentioned in the books of the New Testament are bright with some element of good shining out conspicuously by way of favourable contrast, when brought side by side with the Jewish people, upon whom more abundant and more blessed privileges had been in vain lavished. Let us just note a few instances which will illustrate our view. The soldiers sought John's baptism and humbly received John's penitential advice and direction when priests and scribes rejected the Lord's messenger (Luke iii. 14). A soldier and a centurion received Christ's commendation for the exercise of a faith surpassing in its range and spiritual perception any faith which the Master had found within the bounds and limits of Israel according to the flesh. "Verily I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," were Christ's almost wondering words as He heard the confession of His God-like nature, His Divine power involved in the centurion's prayer of humility, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed" (cf. Matt. viii. 5-13). So was it again with the centurion to whom the details of our Lord's execution were committed. He too is painted in a favourable light. He had an open mind, willing to receive evidence.

He received that evidence under the most unfavourable conditions. His mind was convinced of our Lord's mission and character, not by His triumphs, but by His apparent defeat. As the victim of Jewish malice and prejudice yielded up the ghost and committed His pure, unspotted soul to the hands of His heavenly Father, then it was that, struck by the supernatural spirit of love and gentleness and forgiveness—those great forces of Christianity which never at any other time or in any other age have had their full and fair play—the centurion yielded the assent of his affections and of his intellect to the Divine mission of the suffering Saviour, and cried, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 54). So it was again with Julius the centurion, who courteously entreated St. Paul on his voyage as a prisoner to Rome (Acts xxvii. 3); and so again it was with Cornelius the centurion, of the band called the Italian band.

Now how comes this to pass? What a striking evidence of the workings and presence of the Divine Spirit in the writers of our sacred books we may find in this fact! The Roman soldiers were of course the symbols to a patriotic Jew of a hated foreign sway, of an idolatrous jurisdiction and rule. A Jew uninfluenced by supernatural grace and unguided by Divine inspiration would never have drawn such pictures of Roman centurions as the New Testament has handed down to us. The pictures, indeed, drawn by the opposition press of any country is not generally a favourable one when dealing with the persons and officials of the dominant party. But the apostles—Jews though they were of narrow, provincial, prejudiced Galilee—had drunk deep of the spirit of the new religion. They recognised that Jesus Christ, the King of the

kingdom of heaven, cared nothing about what form of government men lived under. They knew that Christ ignored all differences of climate, age, sex, nationality, or employment. They felt that the only distinctions recognised in Christ's kingdom were spiritual distinctions, and therefore they recognised the soul of goodness wherever found. They welcomed the honest and true heart, no matter beneath what skin it beat, and found therefore in many of these Roman soldiers some of the ablest, the most devoted, and the most effective servants and teachers of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Verily the universal and catholic principles of the new religion which found their first formal proclamation in the age of Cornelius met with an ample vindication and a full reward in the trophies won and the converts gained from such an unpromising source as the ranks of the Roman army. This seems to me one reason for the favourable notices of the Roman soldiers in the New Testament. The Divine Spirit wished to impress upon mankind that birth, position, or employment have no influence upon a man's state in God's sight, and to prove by a number of typical examples that spiritual conditions and excellence alone avail to find favour with the Almighty.

Another reason, however, may be found for this fact. The Scriptures never make light of discipline or training. "Train up a child in the way he should go" is a Divine precept. St. Paul, in his Pastoral Epistles, lays down as one great qualification for a bishop that he should have this power of exercising discipline and rule at home as well as abroad: "For if he knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 5). By discipline, the discipline of Egypt and the wilderness, did God

prepare His people for Canaan. By the discipline of captivity and dispersion, by the discipline of Greek philosophy spreading novel intellectual ideas, by the discipline of Roman dominion executing mighty public works, carrying roads and intercommunication to the remotest and most barbarous nations, did God prepare the world for the revelation of His Son. By the discipline of life, by joy and sorrow, by strife and suffering, by parting and by loss, does God still prepare His faithful ones for the beatific vision of eternal beauty, for the rest and joy of everlasting peace. And discipline worked out its usual results on these military men, even though it was only an imperfect and pagan discipline which these Roman soldiers received. Let us note carefully how this was. The world of unregenerate man at the time of our Lord's appearance had become utterly selfish. Discipline of every kind had been flung off. Self-restraint was practically unknown, and the devil and his works flourished in every circle, bringing forth the fruits of wickedness, uncleanness, and impurity in every direction. The army was the only place or region where in those times any kind of discipline or self-restraint was practised. For no army can permit—even if it be an army of atheists—profligacy and drunkenness to rage, flaunting themselves beneath the very eye of the sun. And as the spiritual result we find that this small measure of pagan discipline acted as a preparation for Christianity, and became under the Divine guidance the means of fitting men like Cornelius of Cæsarea for the reception of the gospel message of purity and peace.[1]

[1] "The Roman camps were also the best training-schools for the old-fashioned virtues of faithfulness, straightforwardness, and hardihood;

But we observe that Cornelius the centurion had one special feature which made him peculiarly fitted to be God's instrument for opening the Christian faith to the Gentile world. The choice of Cornelius is marked by all that skill and prudence, that careful adaptation of means to ends which the Divine workmanship, whether in nature or in grace, ever displays. There were many Roman centurions stationed at Cæsarea, yet none was chosen save Cornelius, and that because he was "a devout man who feared God with all his house, praying to God always, and giving much alms to the people." He feared Jehovah, he fasted, prayed, observed Jewish hours of devotion. His habits were much more those of a devout Jew than of a pagan soldier. He was popular with the Jewish people therefore, like another centurion of whom it was said by the Jewish officials themselves "he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue." The selection of Cornelius as the leader and firstfruits of the Gentiles unto God was eminently prudent and wise. God when He is working out His plans chooses His instruments carefully and skilfully. He leaves nothing to chance. He does nothing imperfectly. Work done by God will repay the keenest scrutiny, the closest study, for it is the model of what every man's work in life ought as far as possible to be—earnest, wise, complete, perfect.

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and in them were to be found the best types of the old Roman character, which, as moralists complained, were to be found elsewhere no more. If the funds of a country town had fallen into disorder, or uprightness was needed for a special post, the curator chosen by the Government was often an old soldier, who had long been tried and trusted; and early Christian history throws, incidentally, a favourable light upon the moral qualities of the Roman officer. These qualities were mainly formed by thoroughness of work and discipline."—W. W. CAPES, *The Early Empire*, p. 210.

IV. Again, looking at the whole passage we perceive therein illustrations of two important laws of the Divine life. We recognise in the case of Cornelius the working of that great principle of the kingdom of God often enunciated by the great Master: "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly," "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine"; or, to put it in other language, that God always bestows more grace upon the man who diligently uses and improves the grace which he already possesses; a principle which indeed we see constantly exemplified in things pertaining to this world as well as in matters belonging to the spiritual life. Thus it was with Cornelius. He was what was called among the Jews a proselyte of the gate. These proselytes were very numerous. They were a kind of fringe hanging upon the outskirts of the Jewish people. They were admirers of Jewish ideas, doctrines, and practices, but they were not incorporated with the Jewish nation nor bound by all their laws and ceremonial restraints. The Levitical Law was not imposed upon them because they were not circumcised. They were merely bound to worship the true God and observe certain moral precepts said to have been delivered to Noah.[1] Such was Cornelius whom the providence of God had led from Italy to Cæsarea for this very purpose, to fulfil His purposes of mercy towards the Gentile world. His residence there had taught him the truth and beauty of the pure worship of Jehovah rendered by the Jews. He had learned too, not only that God is, but that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Cornelius had set himself, there-

[1] See the article on "Proselytes" in Schaff's *Encyclopædia of Theology*.

fore, to the diligent discharge of all the duties of religion so far as he knew them. He was earnest and diligent in prayer, for he recognised himself as dependent upon an invisible God. He was liberal in alms, for he desired to show forth his gratitude for mercies daily received. And acting thus he met with the divinely appointed reward. Cornelius is favoured with a fuller revelation and a clearer guidance by the angel's mouth, who tells him to send and summon Peter from Joppa for this very purpose. What an eminently practical lesson we may learn from God's dealings with this earliest Gentile convert! We learn from the Divine dealings with Cornelius that whosoever diligently improves the lower spiritual advantages which he possesses shall soon be admitted to higher and fuller blessings.

It may well have been that God led him through successive stages and rewarded him under each. In distant Italy, when residing amid the abounding superstitions of that country, conscience was the only preacher, but there the sermons of that monitor were heard with reverence and obeyed with diligence. Then God ordered the course of his life so that public duty summoned him to a distant land. Cornelius may have at the time counted his lot a hard one when despatched to Palestine as a centurion, for it was a province where, from the nature of the warfare there prevalent, there were abundant opportunities of death by assassination at the hands of the Zealots, and but few opportunities of distinction such as might be gained in border warfare with foreign enemies. But the Lord was shaping his career, as He shapes all our careers, with reference to our highest spiritual purposes. He led Cornelius, therefore, to a land and to a town where the pure worship of Jehovah was practised and the elevated

morality of Judaism prevailed. Here, then, were new opportunities placed within the centurion's reach. And again the same spiritual diligence is displayed, and again the same law of spiritual development and enlarging blessing finds a place. Cornelius is devout and liberal and God-fearing, and therefore a heavenly visitor directs his way to still fuller light and grander revelations, and Cornelius the centurion of the Italian band leads the Gentile hosts into the fulness of blessing, the true land flowing with milk and honey, found only in the dispensation of Jesus Christ and within the borders of the Church of God. This was God's course of dealing with the Roman centurion, and it is the course which the same loving dealings still pursues with human souls truly desirous of Divine guidance. The Lord imparts one degree of light and knowledge and grace, but withholds higher degrees till full use has been made of the lower. He speaks to us at first in a whisper; but if we reverently hearken, there is a gradual deepening of the voice, till it is as audible in the crowd as it is in the solitude, and we are continually visited with the messages of the Eternal King.

Now cannot these ideas be easily applied to our own individual cases? A young man, for instance, may be troubled with doubts and questions concerning certain portions of the Christian faith. Some persons make such doubts an excuse for plunging into scenes of riot and dissipation, quenching the light which God has given them and making certain their own spiritual destruction. The case of Cornelius points out the true course which should in such a case be adopted. Men may be troubled with doubts concerning certain doctrines of revelation. But they have no doubt as to the dictates of conscience and the light which natural

religion sheds upon the paths of morals and of life Let them then use the light they have. Let then diligently practise the will of God as it has been revealed. Let them be earnest in prayer, pure and reverent in life, honest and upright in business, and then in God's own time the doubts will vanish, the darkness will clear away, and the ancient promises will be fulfilled, "Light is sown for the righteous," "The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day," "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death."

But the example of Cornelius is of still wider application. The position of Cornelius was not a favourable one for the development of the religious life, and yet he rose superior to all its difficulties, and became thus an eminent example to all believers. Men may complain that they have but few spiritual advantages, and that their station in life is thickly strewn with difficulties, hindering the practices and duties of religion. To such persons we would say, compare yourselves with Cornelius and the difficulties external and internal he had to overcome. Servants, for instance, may labour under great apparent disadvantages. Perhaps, if living in an irreligious family, they have few opportunities for prayer, public or private. Men of business are compelled to spend days and nights in the management of their affairs. Persons of commanding intellect or of high station have their own disadvantages, their own peculiar temptations, growing out of their very prosperity. The case of Cornelius shows that each class can rise superior to their peculiar difficulties and grow in the hidden life of the soul, if they but imitate his example as he grew from grace to grace, improving his scanty store till it grew into a

fuller and ampler one, till it expanded into all the glory of Christian privilege, when Cornelius, like Peter, was enabled to rejoice in the knowledge and love of a risen and glorified Redeemer.[1]

[1] I owe a great many of the devout thoughts dealing with the latter portion of this subject to a volume of sermons preached by the celebrated Golden Lecturer, the eloquent Henry Melville, styled *Voices of the Christian Year*. Melville is now as a preacher quite forgotten, and yet he deserves to be gratefully remembered, for he was the first of the old Evangelical school to break through the traditional repetition of commonplaces which formed the main part of the preaching of the leading popular orators of fifty years ago. From a preacher's point of view his sermons will still repay study. His sermons, for instance, on the less known characters of Scripture, will teach a young divine how to extract edification and instruction out of most unpromising materials, and to apply the essential principles of the Bible to the changed circumstances of modern life. And assuredly this is the real object of a pastor's preaching in a Christian congregation, not the mere repetition of the first elements of Christianity, but an application of its great principles, first proclaimed in the language of the East, to the actions and lives of the men of the West. Preaching of that kind need never be dull and uninteresting,

CHAPTER VI.

THE PETRINE VISION AT JOPPA.

"Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."—ACTS x. 9-15.

THERE are two central figures in the conversion of Cornelius. The one is the centurion himself, the other is St. Peter, the selected and predestined agent in that great work. We have studied Cornelius in the last chapter, and have seen the typical character of all his circumstances. His time, his residence, his training, had all been providential, indicating to us the careful superintendence, the watchful oversight, which God bestows upon the history of individuals as well as of the Church at large. Let us now turn to the other figure, St. Peter, and see if the Lord's providence may not be traced with equal clearness in the circumstances of his case also. We have found Cornelius at Cæsarea, the great Roman port and garrison of Palestine, a very fitting and natural place for a Roman centurion to be

located. We find Peter at this very same time at Joppa, a spot that was consecrated by many a memory and specially associated with a mission to the Gentiles in the times of the Elder Dispensation. Here we trace the hand of the Lord providentially ruling the footsteps of Peter though he knew it not, and leading him, as Philip was led a short time before, to the spot where his intended work lay. The sickness and death of Tabitha or Dorcas led St. Peter to Joppa. The fame of his miracle upon that devout woman led to the conversion of many souls, and this naturally induced Peter to make a longer stay in Joppa at the house of Simon the tanner. How natural and unpremeditated, how very ordinary and unplanned to the natural eye seem the movements of St. Peter! So they would have seemed to us had we been living at Joppa, and yet now we can see with the light which the sacred narrative throws upon the story that the Lord was guiding St. Peter to the place where his work was cut out when the appointed time should come. Surely the history of Peter and his actions have abundant comfort and sustaining hope for ourselves! Our lives may be very ordinary and commonplace; the events may succeed one another in the most matter-of-fact style; there may seem in them nothing at all worthy the attention of a Divine Ruler; and yet those ordinary lives are just as much planned and guided by supernatural wisdom as the careers of men concerning whom all the world is talking. Only let us take care to follow St. Peter's example. He yielded himself completely to the Divine guidance, trusted himself entirely to Divine love and wisdom, and then found in such trust not only life and safety, but what is far better, perfect peace and sweetest calm.

There is something very restful in the picture drawn for us of St. Peter at this crisis. There is none of that feverish hurry and restlessness which make some good men and their methods very trying to others. The notices of him have all an air of repose and Christian dignity. "As Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda"; "Peter put them all forth and prayed"; "Peter abode many days in Joppa"; "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour." St. Peter, indeed, did not live in an age of telegrams and postcards and express trains, which all contribute more or less to that feverish activity and restlessness so characteristic of this age. But even if he had lived in such a time, I am sure his faith in God would have saved him from that fussiness, that life of perpetual hurry, yet never bringing forth any abiding fruit, which we behold in so many moderns. This results a good deal, I believe, from the development—I was almost going to say the tyranny, the unwitting tyranny of modern journalism, which compels men to live so much in public and reports their every utterance. There are men never tired of running from one committee to another, and never weary of seeing their names in the morning papers. They count that they have been busily and usefully employed if their names are perpetually appearing in newspaper reports as speaking, or at any rate being present at innumerable meetings, leaving themselves no time for that quiet meditation whereby St. Peter gained closest communion with heaven. It is no wonder such men's fussiness should be fruitless, because their natures are poor, shallow, uncultivated, where the seed springs up rapidly but brings forth no fruit to perfection, because it has no

deepness of earth. It is no wonder that St. Peter should have spoken with power at Cæsarea and been successful in opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, because he prepared himself for doing the Divine work by the discipline of meditation and thought and spiritual converse with his Risen Lord. And here we may remark, before we pass from this point, that the conversion of the first Gentile and the full and complete exercise of the power of the keys committed to St. Peter run on lines very parallel to those pertaining to the Day of Pentecost and the conversion of the earliest Jews in one respect at least. The Day of Pentecost was preceded by a period of ten days' waiting and spiritual repose. The conversion of Cornelius and the revelation of God's purposes to St. Peter were preceded by a season of meditation and prayer, when an apostle could find time amid all his pressing cares to seek the housetop for midday prayer and to abide many days in the house of one Simon a tanner. A period of pause, repose, and quietness preceded a new onward movement of development and of action.

I. Now, as in the case of Cornelius, so in the case of St. Peter, we note the *place* where the chief actor in the scene abode. It was at Joppa, and Joppa was associated with many memories for the Jews. It has been from ancient times the port of Jerusalem, and is even now rising into somewhat of its former commercial greatness, specially owing to the late development of the orange trade, for the production of which fruit Jaffa or Joppa has become famous. Three thousand years ago Joppa was a favourite resort of the Phenician fleets, which brought the cedars of Lebanon to King Solomon for the building of the temple (2 Chron. ii. 16). At a later period, when God would send Jonah on a mission to Gentile

Nineveh, and when Jonah desired to thwart God's merciful designs towards the outer world, the prophet fled to Joppa and there took ship in his vain effort to escape from the presence of the Lord. And now again Joppa becomes the refuge of another prophet, who feels the same natural hesitation about admitting the Gentiles to God's mercy, but who, unlike Jonah, yields immediate assent to the heavenly message, and finds peace and blessing in the paths of loving obedience. The very house where St. Peter abode is still pointed out.[1] It is situated in the south-western part of the town, and commands a view over the bay of Joppa and the waters of that Mediterranean Sea which was soon to be the channel of communication whereby the gospel message should be borne to the nations of the distant West. We remark, too, that it was with Simon the tanner of Joppa that St. Peter was staying. When a great change is impending various little circumstances occur all showing the tendencies of

[1] The house of Simon the tanner is depicted in Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., pp. 87, 88. There is a good description of it, as also of Joppa at large, in Geikie's *The Holy Land and the Bible*, vol. i., p. 18, from which we take the following: "On the south side of the town, at the edge of the sea, close to the lighthouse, one is reminded of the visit of St. Peter to Joppa by the claim of a paltry mosque to occupy the house of Simon the tanner. The present building is comparatively modern, and cannot be the actual structure in which the Apostle lodged. It is, however, regarded by the Mohammedans as sacred, one of the rooms being used as a place of prayer in commemoration, we are told, of the Lord Jesus having once asked God, while here, for a meal; on which a table forthwith came down from heaven. Strange variation of the story of St. Peter's vision! The waves beat against the low wall of the courtyard, so that, like the actual house of Simon, it is close on the sea-shore. Tanning, moreover, in accordance with the unchanging character of the East, is still extensively carried on in this part of the town."

the age. By themselves and taken one by one they do not express much. At the time when they happen men do not regard them or understand their meaning, but afterwards, and reading them in the light of accomplished facts, men behold their significance. Thus it was with Simon Peter and his visit to Simon the tanner of Joppa. Tanners as a class were despised and comparatively outcast among the Jews. Tanning was counted an unclean trade because of the necessary contact with dead bodies which it involved. A tan-yard must, according to Jewish law, be separated by fifty yards at least from human dwellings. If a man married a woman without informing her of his trade as a tanner, she was granted a divorce. The whole trade of tanners was under a ban, and yet it was to a tanner's house that the Apostle made his way, and there he lodged for many days, showing that the mind even of St. Peter was steadily rising above narrow Jewish prejudices into that higher and nobler atmosphere where he learned in fullest degree that no man and no lawful trade is to be counted common or unclean.

II. We note, again, the *time* when the vision was granted to St. Peter and the mind of the Lord was more fully disclosed to him. Joppa is separated from Cæsarea by a distance of thirty miles. The leading coast towns were then connected by an excellent road, along which horses and vehicles passed with ease. The centurion Cornelius, when he received the angelic direction, forthwith despatched two of his household servants and a devout soldier to summon St. Peter to his presence. They doubtless travelled on horseback, leading spare beasts for the accommodation of the Apostle. Less than twenty-four hours after their departure from

Cæsarea they drew nigh to Joppa, and then it was that God revealed His purposes to His beloved servant. The very hour can be fixed. Cornelius saw the angel at the ninth hour, when, as he himself tells us, "he was keeping the hour of prayer" (x. 30). Peter saw the vision at the sixth hour, when he went up on the house top to pray, according to the example of the Psalmist when he sang, "In the evening and morning and at noon-day will I pray, and that instantly."[1] St. Peter evidently was a careful observer of all the forms amid which his youthful training had been conducted. He did not seek in the name of spiritual religion to discard these old forms. He recognised the danger of any such course. Forms may often tend to formalism on account of the weakness of human nature. But they also help to preserve and guard the spirit of ancient institutions in times of sloth and decay, till the Spirit from on high again breathes upon the dry bones and imparts fresh life. St. Peter used the forms of Jewish externalism, imparting to them some of his own intense earnestness, and the Lord set His seal of approval upon his action by revealing the purposes of His mercy and love to the Gentile world at the noontide hour of prayer. The wisest masters of the spiritual life have ever followed St. Peter's teaching. We may take, for instance, Dr. Goulburn in his valuable treatise on Personal Religion. In the sixth chapter of the fourth part of that work he has some wise thoughts on living by rule in the Christian life, where he points out the use of rules and their abuse, strongly urging upon those who desire to grow in grace the formation of rules by which the practices of religion and the soul's inner life may be directed

[1] This is the rendering of Psalm lv. 18 according to the version in the Book of Common Prayer.

and shielded. There is, for instance, no law of Christ which ties men down to morning and evening prayer. Yet does not our own daily experience teach that, if this unwritten rule of the Christian life be relaxed under the pretence of higher spirituality, and men pray only when they feel specially inclined to communion with the unseen, the whole practice of private as well as of public prayer ceases, and the soul lives in an atheistic atmosphere without any recognition or thought of God.[1] This danger has been recognised from the earliest times. Tertullian was a man of narrow views, but of the most intense piety. He was a devout student of the New Testament, and a careful observer of the example of our Lord and His Apostles. The early Christians adopted from the Jews the custom of prayer at the various hours of the day, and turned it into a practical rule of Christian discipline, acknowledging at the same time that there was no Scriptural obligation in the rule, but that it was a mere wise advice for the development of the spiritual life. This was the origin of what is technically called the Canonical Hours, Matins

[1] A deceased friend of mine, a well-known member of the Society of Friends, once remarked to me about this very point that his Society, to which he belonged to his dying day, while aiming at the highest spirituality, in its neglect of all rules, and suitable therefore for persons of specially exalted tone, had rendered itself unfitted for the training of children. Children cannot be trained without rules, and a society which trusts to educate them in things religious without fixed and definite training must be a hopeless failure. The original principles of "Friends" preclude them from teaching children forms of private prayer, from using fixed Bible reading and regular religious instruction, as well as from stated family worship. Efforts have been made in later times to remedy this effect, but they are merely confessions of the failure of the principles inculcated by George Fox and Robert Barclay and acknowledgments that the Church from which they dissented was right.

with Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, Evensong, and Compline, which can be traced back in germ to the age next after the Apostles, and were originally grounded upon the example of the Apostles themselves, and specially upon that of St. Peter's practice at Joppa. Let us hear Tertullian on this matter. He wrote a treatise on prayer, in which he presses upon the men of his time the duty of earnestness and intensity in that holy exercise, and when doing so touches upon this very point: "As respecting the time of prayer the observance of certain hours will not be unprofitable—those common hours I mean which mark the intervals of the day—the third, sixth, ninth—which we find in Scripture to have been made more solemn than the rest. The first infusion of the Holy Spirit into the congregated disciples took place at the third hour. Peter saw his vision on the housetop at the sixth hour. Peter and John went into the Temple at the ninth hour when he restored the paralytic to his health." Tertullian then adds the following wise observations, showing that he quite grasped the essential distinction between the slavery of the law and the freedom of the gospel in the matter of external observances: "Albeit these practices stand simply without any Divine precept for their observance; still it may be granted a good thing to establish some definite rule which may both add stringency to the admonition to pray and may as it were by a law tear us out of our ordinary business unto such a duty. So that we pray not less than thrice in the day, debtors as we are to Three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—besides of course our regular prayers on the entrance of light and of night." The ecclesiastical practice of the Hours may be turned into a mere formal repetition of certain prescribed tasks; but, like all other ordinances which

trace themselves back to primitive Christianity, the Hours are based on a true conception and a noble ideal of the prevailing and abounding place which prayer should occupy in the soul's life, according to the Saviour's own teaching when He spake a parable to His disciples to this end that men ought always to pray and not to faint.[1]

III. We now arrive at the vision which Peter saw upon the housetop. The Apostle, having ascended upon the housetop commanding a view over the blue waters of the Mediterranean lying shimmering and sweltering beneath the rays of the noonday sun, became hungry, as was natural enough, because the usual time of the midday meal was drawing nigh. But there was a deeper reason for the Apostle's felt need of refreshment, and a more immediate providence was watching over his natural powers and their action than ever before had been revealed. The natural hunger was divinely inspired in order that just at that instant when the representatives and delegates of the Gentile world were drawing nigh to his abode he might be prepared to accord them a fitting reception. To the mere man of sense or to the mere carnal mind the hunger of St. Peter may seem a simple natural operation, but to the devout believer in Christianity, who views it as the great and perfect revelation of God to man, who knows that His covenants are in all things well-ordered and sure, and that in His works in grace as well as in His works in nature the Lord leaves nothing to mere chance, but perfectly orders them all down to the minutest detail, to such an one this human hunger of St. Peter's appears as divinely planned in order that a spiritual satisfaction

[1] Tertullian's treatise on Prayer will be found in Clark's translation of his works, vol. i., pp. 178-204.

and completeness may be imparted to his soul unconsciously craving after a fuller knowledge of the Divine will. St. Peter's hunger is, in fact, but a manifestation in the human sphere of that superhuman foresight which was directing the whole transaction from behind this visible scene; teaching us, in fact, the lesson so often repeated in Holy Scripture that nothing, not even our feelings, our infirmities, our passions, our appetites, are too minute for the Divine love and care, and encouraging us thereby to act more freely upon the apostolic injunction, "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God." If St. Peter's hunger were taken up and incorporated with the Divine plan of salvation, we may be sure that our own wants and trials do not escape the omniscient eye of Him who plans all our lives, appointing the end from the very beginning. St. Peter was hungry, and as food was preparing he fell into a trance, and then the vision answering in its form to the hunger which he felt was granted. Vain questions may here be raised, as we noted before in the case of St. Paul, concerning the trance of the Apostle and the communications he held with the unseen world. They are vain questions for us to raise or to attempt to answer, because they belong to an unexplored land full, as many modern experiments show, of strange mysterious facts peculiar to it. This alone we can say, some communication must have been made to St. Peter which he regarded as a Divine revelation. The conversion and reception by St. Peter of the Gentile centurion are facts, the prejudices of St. Peter against such a reception are also undoubted facts. Hitherto he shared the opinion common to all the Twelve that such a reception was contrary to the Divine law and purposes. He must have received upon

the housetop some kind of a heavenly communication which he regarded as equivalent in authority to that ancient rule by which he esteemed the promises and mercy of God limited to the seed of Abraham. But as for any endeavour to understand or explain the mode of God's action on this occasion, it will be just as vain as attempts to pierce the mysteries of God's action in creation, the incarnation, or, to come lower still, in the processes by which life has been communicated to this world and is now sustained and continued thereon We are in very deed living and moving amid mysteries, and if we refuse to learn or meditate till the mysteries we meet with, the very first step we take, be cleared, we must cease to think and be content to pass life like the beasts that perish. We know not, indeed, the exact manner in which God communicated with St. Peter, or for that matter with any one else to whom He made revelation of His will. We know nothing of the manner in which He spoke to Moses out of the bush, or to Samuel in the night season, or to Isaiah in the Temple. As with these His servants of the Elder Dispensation, so it was with St. Peter on the housetop. We know, however, how St. Luke received his information as to the nature of the vision and all the other facts of the case. St. Luke and St. Peter must have had many an opportunity for conversation in the thrilling, all-important events amid which he had lived. St. Luke too accompanied St. Paul on that journey to Jerusalem described in the twenty-first chapter, and was introduced to the Christian Sanhedrin or Council over which St. James the Just presided. But even if St. Luke had never seen St. Peter, he had abundant opportunities of learning all about the vision. St. Peter proclaimed it to the world from the very time it

happened, and was obliged to proclaim it as his defence against the party zealous for the law of Moses. St. Peter referred to what God had just shown him as soon as he came into the centurion's presence. He described the vision at full length as soon as he came to Jerusalem and met the assembled Church, where its power and meaning were so clearly recognised that the mouths of all St. Peter's adversaries were at once stopped. And again at the Council of Jerusalem held, as described in the fifteenth chapter, St. Peter refers to the circumstances of this whole story as well known to the whole Church in that city. St. Luke then would have no difficulty, writing some twenty years later, in ascertaining the facts of this story, and naturally enough, when writing to a Gentile convert and having in mind the needs and feelings of the Gentiles, he inserted the narrative of the vision as being the foundation-stone on which the growing and enlarging edifice of Gentile Christianity had been originally established. The vision too was admirably suited to serve its purpose. It based itself, as I have said, on Peter's natural feelings and circumstances, just as spiritual things ever base themselves upon and respond to the natural shadows of this lower life, just as the Holy Communion, for instance, bases itself upon the natural craving for food and drink, but rises and soars far away above and beyond the material sphere to the true food of the soul, the Divine banquet wherewith God's secret and loved ones are eternally fed. Peter was hungry, and a sheet was seen let down from heaven containing all kinds of animals, clean and unclean, together with creeping things and fowls of heaven. He was commanded to rise and slay and appease his hunger. He states the objection, quite natural in the mouth of a conscientious

Jew, that nothing common or unclean had ever been eaten by him. Then the heavenly voice uttered words which struck for him the death-knell of the old haughty Jewish exclusiveness, inaugurating the grand spirit of Christian liberalism and of human equality—"What God hath cleansed, make thou not common." The vision was thrice repeated to make the matter sure, and then the heavens were shut up again, and Peter was left to interpret the Divine teaching for himself. Peter, in the light of the circumstances which a few moments later took place, easily read the interpretation of the vision. The distinction between animals and foods was for the Jew but an emblem and type, a mere object lesson of the distinction between the Jews and other nations. The Gentiles ate every kind of animal and creeping thing; the favourite food of the Roman soldiers with whom the Palestinian Jews came most in contact being pork. The differences which the Divine law compelled the Jew to make in the matter of food were simply the type of the difference and separation which God's love and grace had made between His covenant people and those outside that covenant. And just then, to clinch the matter and interpret the vision by the light of divinely ordered facts, the Spirit announced to the Apostle, as "he was much perplexed in himself what the vision might mean," that three men were seeking him, and that he was to go with them doubting nothing, "for I have sent them."[1] The hour had at last come for the mani-

[1] Calvin, in his commentary on Acts x. 12, has some excellent remarks on the scope and meaning of this vision. "I think that hereby is shown to Peter that the distinction which God hitherto made had now been removed. For as He had made a difference between animals; so by the choice of one nation for Himself, God showed that other nations were common and unclean. Now the distinction between animals being removed, He consequently shows that there is no longer

festation of God's everlasting purposes, when the sacred society should assume its universal privileges and stand forth resplendent in its true character as God's Holy Catholic Church,—of which the Temple had been a temporary symbol and pledge,—a house of prayer for all nations, the joy of the whole earth, the city of the Great King, until the consummation of all things.

IV. The sacred historian next presents St. Peter at Cæsarea. The Apostle rose up obedient to the Divine communication, admitted the men who sought him, lodged them for the night, departed back the next day

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any difference between men, and that the Jew does not differ from the Greek. Hence Peter is warned not to shrink from contact with the Gentiles as if they were unclean. There is no doubt but that God wished to encourage Peter to come boldly to Cornelius. Therefore, in order that he might be perfectly satisfied, God shows him as in a picture that the distinctions made by the law between clean and unclean had been abolished; whence he may conclude that the partition which had hitherto divided Jews from Gentiles was now overthrown. Now Paul teaches that this mystery had been hid from the ages that the Gentiles should be partakers with God's people and grafted into one body. Therefore Peter never would have dared to open the gate of the Kingdom of Heaven, unless God Himself had shown him that the wall had been removed and that entrance was free to all." He then goes on to consider the objection that St. Peter must have known of the call of the Gentiles from the words of Christ's commission to go and make disciples of all nations, and therefore this vision was unnecessary. "I answer that there was so much difficulty in the novelty of the whole state of affairs that the apostles could not at once grasp the position. They knew indeed in theory the prophecies and the precept of Christ about preaching to the Gentiles, but when they came to practice, struck by the awful novelty, they hesitated. Wherefore it is not wonderful that the Lord should confirm St. Peter's mind by a new sign." Calvin clearly recognised that the inspiration enjoyed by St. Peter did not remove his natural slowness of perception. The apostles were like the bulk of ordinary men, very slow to grasp the full meaning of a novel position or principle.

along the same road which they had followed, and arrived at Cæsarea on the fourth day from the original appearance to Cornelius; so that if the angel had been seen by the centurion on Saturday or the Sabbath the vision would have been seen at Joppa on the Lord's Day, and then on Tuesday St. Peter must have arrived at Cæsarea. St. Peter did not travel alone. He doubtless communicated the vision he had seen to the Church at Joppa at the evening hour of devotion, and determined to associate with himself six prominent members of that body in the fulfilment of his novel enterprise that they might be witnesses of God's actions and assistants to himself in the work of baptism and of teaching. As soon as the missionary party arrived at the house of Cornelius, they found a large party assembled to meet them, as Cornelius had called together his kinsmen and acquaintances to hear the message from heaven. Cornelius received St. Peter with an expression of such profound reverence, prostrating himself on the earth, that St. Peter reproved him: "But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up: I myself also am a man." Cornelius, with his mind formed in a pagan mould and permeated with pagan associations and ideas, regarded Peter as a superhuman being, and worthy therefore of the reverence usually rendered to the Roman Emperor as the living embodiment of deity upon earth. He fell down and adored St. Peter, even as St. John adored the angel who revealed to him the mysteries of the unseen world (Rev. xxii. 8), till reminded by St. Peter that he was a mere human being like the centurion himself, full of human prejudices and narrow ideas which would have prevented him accepting the invitation of Cornelius if God Himself had not intervened. Cor-

nelius then describes the circumstances of his vision and the angelic directions which he had received, ending by requesting St. Peter to announce the revelation of which he was the guardian. The Apostle then proceeds to deliver an address, of which we have recorded a mere synopsis alone; the original address must have been much longer. St. Peter begins the first sermon delivered to Gentiles by an assertion of the catholic nature of the Church, a truth which he only just now learned: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him": a passage which has been much misunderstood. People have thought that St. Peter proclaims by these words that it was no matter what religion a man professed, provided only he led a moral life and worked righteousness. His doctrine is of quite another type. He had already proclaimed to the Jews the exclusive claims of Christ as the door and gate of eternal life. In the fourth chapter and twelfth verse he had told the Council at Jerusalem that "in none other than Jesus Christ of Nazareth is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men wherein we must be saved." St. Peter had seen and heard nothing since which could have changed his views or made him think conscious faith in Jesus Christ utterly unimportant, as this method of interpretation, to which I refer, would teach. St. Peter's meaning is quite clear when we consider the circumstances amid which he stood. He had hitherto thought that the privilege of accepting the salvation offered was limited to the Jews. Now he had learned from Heaven itself that the offer of God's grace and mercy was free to all, and that wherever man was responding to the dictates of

conscience and yielding assent to the guidance of the inner light with which every man was blessed, there God's supreme revelation was to be proclaimed and for them the doors of God's Church were to be opened wide.

St. Peter then proceeds, in his address, to recapitulate the leading facts of the gospel story. He begins with John's baptism, glances at Christ's miracles, His crucifixion, resurrection, and mission of the apostles, concluding by announcing His future return to be the Judge of quick and dead. St. Peter must, of course, have entered into greater details than we possess in our narrative; but it is not always noticed that he was addressing people not quite ignorant of the story which he had to tell. St. Peter begins by expressly stating, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)—that saying ye yourselves know." Cornelius and his friends were devout and eager students of Jewish religious movements, and they had heard in Cæsarea vague reports of the words and doings of the great prophet who had caused such commotion a few years before. But then they were outside the bounds of Israel, whose religious authorities had rejected this prophet. The religion of Israel had illuminated their own pagan darkness, and they therefore looked up to the decision of the high priests and of the Sanhedrin with profound veneration, and dared not to challenge it. They had never previously come in personal contact with any of the new prophet's followers, and if they had, these followers would not have communicated to them anything of their message. They simply knew that a wondrous teacher had appeared, but that his teaching was universally repudiated by the men whose

views they respected, and therefore they remained content with their old convictions. The information, however, which they had gained formed a solid foundation, upon which St. Peter proceeded to raise the superstructure of Christian doctrine, impressing the points which the Jews denied—the resurrection of Christ and His future return to judge the world.

In this connexion St. Peter touches upon a point which has often exercised men's minds. In speaking of the resurrection of Christ he says, "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." From the time of Celsus, who lived in the second century, people have asked, Why did not the risen Saviour manifest Himself to the chief priests and Pharisees? Why did He show Himself merely to His friends? It is evident that from the very beginning this point was emphasised by the Christians themselves, as St. Peter expressly insists upon it on this occasion. Now several answers have been given to this objection. Bishop Butler in his *Analogy* deals with it. He points out that it is only in accordance with the laws of God's dealings in ordinary life. God never gives overwhelming evidence. He merely gives sufficient evidence of the truth or wisdom of any course, and till men improve the evidence which He gives He withholds further evidence. Christ gave the Jews sufficient evidences of the truth of His work and mission in the miracles which He wrought and the gracious words which distilled like Divine dew from His lips. They refused the evidence which He gave, and it would not have been in accordance with the principles of Divine

action that He should then give them more convincing evidence. Then, again, the learned Butler argues that it would have been useless, so far as we are concerned, to have manifested Christ to the Jewish nation at large, unless He was also revealed and demonstrated to be the risen Saviour to the Romans, and not to them merely, but also to each successive generation of men as they arose. For surely if men can argue that the apostles and the five hundred brethren who saw Christ were deceived, or were the subjects of a temporary illusion, it might be as justly argued that the high priests and the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem were in their turn deceived or the subjects of a hallucination which their longing desire for a Messiah had produced. In modern times, again, Dr. Milligan in an able and acute work on the Resurrection has argued that it was impossible, from the nature of the resurrection body and the character of the resurrection state, for Christ to be thus manifested to the Jewish nation. He belonged to a different plane. He lived now on a higher level. He could not now be submitted to a coarse contact with gross carnal men. He was obliged therefore to depend upon the testimony of His chosen witnesses, fortified and confirmed by the evidence of miracles, of prophecy, and of the Holy Ghost speaking in them and working with them. All these arguments are most true and sound, and yet they fail to come home to many minds. They leave something to be desired. They fail in showing the wisdom of the actual course that was adopted. They leave men thinking in their secret hearts, would it not after all have been the best and most satisfactory course if the risen Lord had been manifested to all the people and not merely to witnesses chosen before of God? I think there is an argument

which has not been sufficiently worked out, and which directly meets and answers this objection. The risen Saviour was not manifested to all the people because such a course would have wrecked the great cause which He had at heart, and defeated the great end of His Incarnation, which was to establish a Church on the earth where righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost would find place and abound. Let us take it in this way. Let us inquire what would have been the immediate consequence had Christ been revealed to all the people gathered in their millions for the celebration of the Passover. They would either have rejected Him afresh or they would have accepted Him. If they rejected Him, they would be only intensifying their responsibility and their guilt. If they accepted Him as their long-expected Messiah, then would have come the catastrophe. In their state of strained expectation and national excitement they would have swept away every barrier, they would have rushed to arms and burst into open rebellion against the Romans, initiating a war which would have only ended with the annihilation of the Jewish race or with the destruction of the Roman Empire. The immediate result of the manifestation of the risen Saviour to the chief priests and the people would have been a destruction of human life of such a widespread and awful character as the world had never seen. This we know from history would have been infallibly the case. Again and again during the first and second centuries the Jews burst forth into similar rebellions, urged on by some fanatic who pretended to be the long-expected deliverer, and tens of thousands, aye, even hundreds of thousands of human lives Jewish and Gentile were repeatedly sacrificed on the altar of this vain carnal expectation.

We are expressly informed too that our Lord had experience in His own person of this very danger. St. John tells us that Christ Himself had on one occasion to escape from the Jews when they were designing to take Him by force and make Him a King; while again the first chapter of this Book of Acts and the query which the apostles propounded upon the very eve of the Ascension show that even they with all the teaching which they had received from our Lord concerning the purely spiritual and interior nature of His kingdom still shared in the national delusions, and were cherishing dreams of a carnal empire and of human triumphs. We conclude, then, on purely historical grounds, and judging from the experience of the past, that the course which God actually adopted was profoundly wise and eminently calculated to avoid the social dangers which surrounded the path of the Divine developments. I think that if we strive to realise the results which would have followed the manifestation of Christ in the manner which objectors suggest, we shall see that the whole spiritual object, the great end of Christ's Incarnation, would have been thus defeated. That great end was to establish a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and humility; and that was the purpose attained by the mode of action which was in fact adopted. From the Day of Pentecost onward the Church grew and flourished, developing and putting in practice, however imperfectly, the laws of the Sermon on the Mount. But if Christ had revealed Himself to the unconverted Jews of Jerusalem after the Resurrection, it would not have had the slightest effect towards making them Christians after the model which He desired. Nay, rather such an appearance would merely have

intensified their narrow Judaism and confirmed them in those sectarian prejudices, that rigid exclusiveness from which Christ had come to deliver His people. The spiritual effects of such an appearance would have been absolutely nothing. The temporal effects of it would have been awfully disastrous, unless indeed God had consented to work the most prodigious and astounding miracles, such as smiting the Roman armies with destruction and interfering imperiously with the course of human society.

Then again it is worthy of notice that such a method of dealing with the Jews would have been contrary to Christ's methods and laws of action as displayed during His earthly ministry. He never worked miracles for the mere purposes of intellectual conviction. When a sign from heaven was demanded from Him for this very purpose He refused it. He ever aimed at spiritual conversion. An exhibition of the risen Lord to the Jewish nation might have been followed by a certain amount of intellectual conviction as to His Divine authority and mission. But, apart from the power of the Holy Ghost, which had not been then poured out, this intellectual conviction would have been turned to disastrous purposes, as we have now shown, and have proved utterly useless towards spiritual conversion. The case of the Resurrection is, in fact, in many respects like the case of the Incarnation. We think in our human blindness that we would have managed the manifestations and revelations of God much better, and we secretly find fault with the Divine methods, because Christ did not come much earlier in the world's history and thousands of years had to elapse before the Divine Messenger appeared. But then, Scripture assures us that it was in the fulness

of time Christ came, and a profounder investigation will satisfy us that history and experience bear out the testimony of Scripture. In the same way human blindness imagines that it would have managed the Resurrection far better, and it has a scheme of its own whereby Christ should have been manifested at once to the Jews, who would have been at once converted into Christians of the type of the apostles, and then Christ should have advanced to the city of Rome, casting down the idols in His triumphant march, and changing the Roman Empire into the Kingdom of God. This is something like the scheme which the human mind in secret substitutes for the Divine plan, a scheme which would have involved the most extravagant interruptions of the world's business, the most extraordinary interpositions on God's part with the course of human affairs. For one miracle which the Divine method has necessitated, the human plan, which lies at the basis of the objections we are considering, would have necessitated the working of a thousand miracles and these of a most stupendous type. These considerations will help to show what bad judges we are of the Divine methods of action, and will tend towards spiritual and mental humility by impressing upon us the inextricable confusion into which we should inevitably land the world's affairs had we but the management of them for a very few hours. Verily as we contemplate the Resurrection of Christ and the management of the whole plan of salvation, we gather glimpses of the supernatural wisdom whereby the whole was ordered, and learn thus to sing with a deeper meaning the ancient strain, "Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou

leddest thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron."[1]

The sacred narrative then tells us that "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." The brethren which came from Joppa, strict observers of the law of Moses as they were, beheld the external proofs of God's presence, and were amazed, "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," which is further explained by the words, "they heard the Gentiles speaking with tongues and magnifying God." The gift of the Holy Ghost takes the same and yet a different shape from that in which it was manifested on the Day of Pentecost. The gifts of tongues on the Day of Pentecost was manifested in a variety of languages, because there was a vast variety of tongues and nationalities then present at Jerusalem. But it would seem as if on this occasion the Holy Ghost and His gift of speech displayed itself in sacred song and holy praise: "They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." Greek was practically the one tongue of all those who were present. The new converts had been inhabitants for years of Cæsarea which was now one of the most thoroughly Greek towns in Palestine, so that the gift of tongues as displayed on this occasion must have been

[1] The aim of Christianity was to strike at the essential evil of the human heart. One darling sin of man is ostentation. It was one special vice of society in the age of the Incarnation, as students of the history of that period know right well. Now the real objection to the Divine method of action about Christ's Resurrection is that it was not ostentatious. If the human scheme had been adopted, it would simply have encouraged and sanctioned the ostentation which already dominated the world. But the Divine rule ever is this, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," and in the very method of its development Christianity has taught men humility and self-abasement.

of somewhat different character from that exercised on the Day of Pentecost, when a vast variety of nations heard the company of the disciples and apostles speaking in their own languages. There is another difference too between the original outpouring of the Holy Ghost and this repetition of the gift. The Holy Ghost on the first occasion was poured out upon the preachers of the word to qualify them to preach to the people. The Holy Ghost on the second occasion was poured out upon the persons to whom the word was preached to sanction and confirm the call of the Gentiles. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are confined to no rank or order. They are displayed as the common property of all Christian people, and indicate the freedom and the plenteousness wherewith God's blessings shall be dispensed under the new covenant which was taking the place of the old Levitical Law.

And then comes the last touch which the narrative puts to the whole story: "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." What a corrective we here find of those ultra-spiritual views which make shipwreck of faith! We have known intelligent men speak as if the apostles laid no stress upon holy baptism, and valued it not one whit as compared with the interior gift of the Holy Ghost. We have known intelligent members of the Society of Friends who could not see that the apostles taught the necessity for what they call water baptism. For both these classes of objectors these words of St. Peter, this incident in the story of Cornelius have an important lesson. They prove the absolute necessity in the apostolic estimation of the

rite of Holy Baptism as perpetually practised in the Church of God. For surely if ever the washing of water in the name of the Holy Trinity could have been dispensed with, it was in the case of men upon whom God had just poured the supernatural gift of the Holy Ghost; and yet even in their case the divinely appointed sacrament of entrance into the sacred society could not be dispensed with. They were baptized with water in the sacred name, and then, cherishing that sweet sense of duty fulfilled and obedience rendered and spiritual peace and joy possessed which God bestows upon His elect people, they entered into that fuller knowledge and richer grace, that feast of spiritual fat things which St. Peter could impart, as he told them from his own personal knowledge of the life and teaching of Christ Jesus. It is no wonder that the history of this critical event should terminate with these words: "Then prayed they him to tarry certain days,"[1] expressing their keen desire to drink more deeply of the well of life thus lately opened to their fainting souls.

[1] Tradition tells very little about Cornelius. There is indeed a long article devoted to him by the Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum*, Feb. t. I, p. 280, but there is nothing in it. He is commemorated on Feb. 2nd. The Greeks make him bishop of Scepsis, the Latins of Cæsarea. St. Jerome says that in his time the house of Cornelius had been turned into a church. The story of his life as told in the Martyrologies is evidently a mere mediæval concoction. At Scepsis the prefect Demetrius brings him into a temple of Apollo, when at his prayer the idol is smashed to pieces and the magistrate converted. Such stories are, however, the stock-in-trade of the legend-mongers of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HARVEST OF THE GENTILES.

"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."—ACTS xi. 26.

THE eleventh chapter of the Acts is clearly divisible into two portions. There is first the narrative of St. Peter's reception at Jerusalem after the conversion of Cornelius, and secondly the story of the origin of the Antiochene Church, the mother and metropolis of Gentile Christendom. They are distinct the one from the other, and yet they are closely connected together, for they both deal with the same great topic, the admission of the Gentiles to full and free communion in the Church of God. Let us then search out the line of thought which runs like a golden thread through this whole chapter, sure that in doing so we shall find light shed upon some modern questions from this divinely written ecclesiastical history.

I. St. Peter tarried a certain time with Cornelius and the other new converts at Cæsarea. There was doubtless much to be taught and much to be set in order. Baptism was in the early Church administered when the converts were yet immature in faith and knowledge. The Church was viewed as a hospital, where the sick and feeble were to be admitted and cured. It was not therefore demanded of candidates for admission that they should be perfectly instructed in

all the articles and mysteries of the Christian faith. There were indeed some points in which they were not instructed at all till they had been "buried with Christ through baptism into death." Then when they had taken their stand upon the Christian platform, and were able to view the matter from the true vantage point, they were admitted into fuller and deeper mysteries. Peter too must have had his work cut out for him at Cæsarea in striving to organise the Church. St. Philip may have here lent his aid, and may have been constituted the resident head of the local Church.[1] After the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch he worked his way up to Cæsarea, preaching in all the towns and villages of that populous district. There he seems to have fixed his residence, as fifteen years or so later we find him permanently located in that city with his "four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts xxi. 8, 9). We may be sure that some such Church organisation was immediately started at Cæsarea. We have already traced the work of organisation in Jerusalem. The apostles originally embraced in themselves all ministerial offices, as in turn these offices were originally all summed up in Jesus Christ. The apostles had taken an important step in the establishment of the order of deacons at Jerusalem, retaining in their own hands the supreme power to which appeal and reports could be made. At Damascus it is evident that at the time of St. Paul's conversion there was an organised Church, Ananias being the head and chief of it, with whom communications were officially held; while the notices about Joppa and the six witnesses of his action whom

[1] The Church tradition reports, however, that Cornelius was first bishop of Cæsarea, but without any solid authority for the statement. See, however, the note in last chapter, p. 141.

St. Peter brought with him to Cæsarea indicate that an assembly or Church organised after the model of the Jerusalem Church existed in that town.

Having concluded his work in Cæsarea St. Peter returned to Jerusalem, and there had to render an account of his action and was placed upon his defence. "When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." This simple circumstance throws much light upon the character of earliest Christianity. It was to a large extent a Christian democracy. The apostles exercised the supreme executive power, but the collective Christian assembly claimed the exercise of their private judgment, and, above all, knew not anything of the fancied privilege of St. Peter, as Prince of the Apostles, to lay down on his own authority the laws for the whole Christian Commonwealth. Here was St. Peter exercising his ministry and apostolic power among the earliest Christians. How were his ministry and authority received? Were they treated as if the personal authority and decision of St. Peter settled every question without any further appeal? This will be best seen if we tell a story well known in the annals of ecclesiastical history. The fable of Papal Supremacy began to be asserted about the year 500, when a series of forgeries were circulated concerning the bishops of Rome and their decisions during the ages of persecution. One of these forgeries dealt with a pope named Marcellinus, who presided over the See of Rome during the beginning of the great Diocletian persecution. The story goes on to tell that Marcellinus fell into idolatry in order to save his life. A council of three hundred bishops was summoned at Sinuessa, when the assembled bishops are reported

to have refused to pass sentence on the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, saying that the Holy See may be judged by no man. They therefore called upon the Pope to condemn himself, as he alone was a judge competent to exercise such a function. This story, according to Döllinger, was forged about the year 500, and it clearly exhibits the different view taken of the position of St. Peter in the Church of Jerusalem and of his alleged successors in the Church of Rome five centuries later. In the latter case St. Peter's successor cannot be judged or condemned by any mortal.[1] According to the Acts of the Apostles the members of the stricter party in the Church of Jerusalem had no hesitation in challenging the actions and teaching of St. Peter himself, and it was only when he could prove the immediate and manifest approval of Heaven that they ceased their opposition, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

We can in this incident see how the Church was slowly but surely developing itself under the Divine guidance. The incident when the order of deacons was instituted was the primary step. There was then first manifested that combination of authority and freedom united with open discussion which, originating in the Christian Church, has been the source of all modern society, of modern governments, and modern methods of legislation. Now we see the same ideas applied to questions of doctrine and discipline, till we come in a short time to the perfection of this method in the celebrated Council of Jerusalem which framed the charter and traced out the main lines of development

[1] See the article on Marcellinus (1) in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iii., p. 804, where all the facts are told of this curious story.

upon which the Church of the Gentiles and true gospel freedom were established.

II. The centre of Christian interest now shifts its position and fixes itself in the city of Antioch, where a further step in advance was taken. Our attention is first of all recalled to the results of St. Stephen's death. "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." This is clearly a case of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and the question has been raised, Was the action of these men of Cyprus and Cyrene quite independent of the action of St. Peter or an immediate result of the same? Did the men of Cyprus and Cyrene preach the gospel to the Gentiles of Antioch of their own motion, or did they wait till tidings of St. Peter's action had reached them, and then, yielding to the generous instincts which had been long beating in the hearts of these Hellenistic Jews, did they proclaim at Antioch the glad tidings of salvation which the Gentiles of that gay and brilliant but very wicked city so much needed? Our answer to these queries is very short and plain. We think that the preaching of the Hellenists of Cyprus to the Gentiles of Antioch must have been the result of St. Peter's action at Cæsarea, else why did they wait till Antioch was reached to open their mouths to the pagan world? Surely if the sight of sin and wickedness and civilised depravity was necessary to stir them up to efforts for the spiritual welfare of the Gentile world, Phœnicia and Cyprus abounded

with scenes quite sufficient to unseal their lips. But the force of national prejudice and of religious exclusiveness was too strong till they came to Antioch, where tidings must have reached them of the vision and action of St. Peter at Cæsarea.

It is easy to see why this information reached the missionaries at Antioch. Cæsarea was the Roman capital of Palestine, and was a seaport. Antioch was the Roman capital of the province of Syria, an immense extent of territory, which included not merely the country which we call Syria, but extended to the Euphrates on the west and to the desert intervening between Palestine and Egypt on the south. The prefect of the East resided at Antioch, and he was one of the three or four greatest officials under the Roman emperor. Palestine was, in fact, a part of the province of Syria, and its ruler or president was dependent upon the governor of Syria. It is therefore in strictest accordance with the facts of Roman history when St. Luke tells in his Gospel (ii. 2) concerning the taxation of Augustus Cæsar, "This was the first enrolment made when Quirinus was governor of Syria." Antioch being then the seat of the central government of the eastern division of the Roman Empire, and Cæsarea being the headquarters of an important lieutenant of the Syrian proconsul, it is no wonder there should have been very constant intercourse between the two places. The great magazines of arms for the entire east were located at Antioch, and there too the money was coined necessary to pay the troops and to carry on commercial intercourse. It must have been very easy for an official like Cornelius, or even for any simple private soldier or for an ordinary Jew or Christian of Cæsarea,

to communicate with Antioch, and to send word concerning the proceedings of St. Peter and the blessings vouchsafed by God to any devout person who might be there seeking after light and truth.[1] It is quite natural therefore that, while the Christians dispersed into various lands by the persecution at Jerusalem restrained themselves to the Jews alone throughout their previous labours, when the men of Cyprus and Cyrene heard tidings at Antioch of St. Peter and his doings and revelations at Cæsarea, they at last allowed free scope to their longings which long ago had found place in their more liberalised hearts, and testified to the Gentiles of Antioch concerning the gladsome story of the gospel. Here again we behold another instance of the value of culture and travel and enlarged intelligence. The Hellenists of Cyprus and Cyrene were the first to realise and act out the principle which God had taught St. Peter. They saw that God's mercies were not restrained to the particular case of Cornelius. They realised that his was a typical instance, and that his conversion was intended to carry with it and to decide the possibility of Gentile salvation and the formation of a Gentile Church all over the world, and they put the principle in operation at once in one of the places where it was most needed: "When the men of Cyprus and Cyrene were come to Antioch, they spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." The method of the Divine development was in the primitive ages very similar to that we often still behold. Some improvement is required, some new principle has to be set in motion. If younger men begin the work, or if

[1] Cæsarea and Antioch were about two hundred miles distant from each other by sea. A Roman trireme travelling at express speed would easily have accomplished this distance in two or at most three days.

souls notorious for their freer thought or less prejudiced understandings, attempt to introduce the novel principle, the vast mass of stolid conservative opposition and attachment to the past is at once quickened into lively action. But then some Peter or another, some man of known rectitude and worth, and yet of equally well-known narrow views and devoted adherence to the past, takes some hesitating step in advance. He may indeed strive to limit its application to the special case before him, and he may earnestly deprecate any wider application of the principle on which he has acted. But it is all in vain. He has served the Divine purposes. His narrowness and respectability and personal weight have done their work, and have sanctioned the introduction of the principle which then is applied upon a much wider scale by men whose minds have been liberalised and trained to seize a great broad principle and put it into practical operation.

III. "When they came to Antioch, they spake the word to the Greek also." And verily the men of Cyprus and Cyrene chose a fitting spot to open the kingdom of heaven to the Greek world and to found the mother Church of Gentile Christendom, for no city in the whole world was more completely Satan's seat, or more entirely devoted to those works which St. John describes as the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the vain-glory of life. Let us reflect a little on the history and state of Antioch, and we shall then see the Divine motive in selecting it as the site of the first great Gentile Church, and we shall see too the Divine guidance which led St. Luke in this typical ecclesiastical history to select the Church of Antioch for such frequent notice, exceeding, as it does, all other Churches save Jerusalem in the amount

of attention bestowed upon it in the Acts of the Apostles.[1]

Antioch and Alexandria were towns dating from the same epoch. They came into existence about the year 300 B.C., being the creation of Alexander the Great himself, or of the generals who divided his empire between them. The city of Antioch was originally built by Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the kingdom of Syria, but was subsequently enlarged, so that in St. Paul's time it was divided into four independent districts or towns, each surrounded by its own walls, and all included within one vast wall some fifty feet high, which surmounted mountain tops and was carried at vast expense across valleys and ravines. Antioch was in the first century counted the third city in the world, Rome being first, Alexandria second, and Antioch third. It had marvellous natural advantages. It was blessed with charming mountain scenery. The peaks rising up on all sides could be seen from every part of the city, imparting thus to life in Antioch that sense not merely of beauty and grandeur, but of the nearness of such beauty and grandeur combined with solitude and freedom from the madding crowd which seem so sweet to a man who passes his life amid the noise and hurry of a great city. What a change in the conditions of life in London would be at once brought about could the scenery surrounding Edinburgh or Lucerne be transferred to the world's metropolis, and the toiler in Fleet Street and the Strand be enabled to look amid his daily labours upon cloud-piercing mount-

[1] The various Lives of St. Paul and Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall* give minute accounts of Antioch, its grandeur and wickedness; K. O. Müller's *Antiquities of Antioch*, Göttingen, 1839 is an exhaustive work on the subject; see also Mommsen's *Provinces*, Book VIII., ch. x.

ains or peaks clad in a robe of virgin white! Antioch was built upon the southern bank of the river Orontes, along which it extended about five miles. The main street of the city, otherwise called the Street of Herod after the celebrated Herod the Great who built it, was four and a half miles long. This street was unrivalled among the cities of the world, and was furnished with an arcade on both sides extending its whole length, beneath which the inhabitants could walk and transact business at all times free from the heat and from the rain. The water supply of Antioch was its special feature. The great orator Libanius, a native of Antioch, who lived three hundred years later than St. Paul, while the city yet stood in all its grandeur and beauty, thus dwells on this feature of Antioch in a panegyric composed under the Emperor Constantius: "That wherein we beat all other is the water supply of our city; if in other respects any one may compete with us, all give way so soon as we come to speak of the water, its abundance and its excellence. In the public baths every stream has the proportions of a river, in the private baths several have the like, and the rest not much less. One measures the abundance of running water by the number of the dwelling-houses; for as many as are the dwelling-houses, so many are also the running waters. Therefore we have no fighting at the public wells as to who shall come first to draw—an evil under which so many considerable towns suffer, when there is a violent crowding round the wells and outcry over broken jars. With us the public fountains flow for ornament, since every one has water within his doors. And this water is so clear that the pail appears empty, and so pleasant that it invites us to drink."[1] Such was

[1] The same orator informs us that the streets of Antioch were lighted

the description of a pagan who saw Antioch even as St. Paul saw it, and testified concerning the natural gifts with which God had endowed it. But, alas! as with individuals, so is it with cities. God may lavish His best blessings, and yet instead of bringing forth the fruits of righteousness His choicest gifts of nature may be turned into fruitful seed plots of lust and sin. Sodom and Gomorrha were planted in a vale that was well watered and fair and fruitful, even as the Garden of the Lord; but the inhabitants thereof were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly; and so it was with Antioch. This city so blessed in situation and in nature's richest and most precious gifts was celebrated for its wicked pre-eminence amid the awful corruption which then overspread the cities of the world. When the Roman satirist Juvenal, writing about this period of which we treat, would fain account for the excessive dissolution of morals which then prevailed at Rome, his explanation of it was that the manners of Antioch had invaded Rome and corrupted its ancient purity:

"Jampridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes."[1]

Amid the general wickedness of Antioch there was

at night with public lamps. In this respect it stood alone among the cities of antiquity: see Libanius, I., 363, and the notes of Valesius on Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv., 1, 9.

[1] Juv., *Sat.*, iii., 62. See Farrar's *St. Paul*, ch. xvi., for a more minute account of the wickedness of Antioch than we can give in this place. He well remarks: "Cities liable to the influx of heterogeneous races are rarely otherwise than immoral and debased. Even Rome in the decadence of its Cæsarism could groan to think of the dregs of its degradation—the quacks and pandars, and musicians and dancing girls—poured into the Tiber by the Syrian Orontes. . . . It seems as though it were a law of human intercourse that, when races are commingled in large masses, the worst qualities of each appear intensified in the general iniquity."

one element of life and hope and purity. The Jews of Antioch formed a large society in that city governed by their own laws and preserving themselves by their peculiar discipline free from the abounding vices of Oriental paganism. It was at Antioch as it was at Alexandria and Damascus. The Jews at Alexandria had their alabarch to whom they owed special allegiance and by whom alone they were ruled; the Jews of Damascus had their ethnarch who exercised peculiar jurisdiction over them; and so too had the Jews of Antioch a peculiar ruler of their own, forming thus an *imperium in imperio* running counter to our Western notions which in many respects demand an iron uniformity very foreign to the Eastern mind, and show themselves eminently deficient in that flexibility and diversity which found an abundant play even among the arrangements of the Roman Empire.[1] This Jewish quarter of Antioch had for centuries been growing and extending itself, and its chief synagogue had been glorified by the reception of some of the choicest temple spoils which the kings of Syria had at first carried captive from Jerusalem and then in a fit of repentance or of prudent policy had bestowed upon the Jewish colony in their capital city.

Such was the city to which the men of Cyprus and Cyrene were now carrying the news of the gospel, intending, doubtless, to tell merely their Jewish fellow-countrymen and religionists of the Messiah whose love and power they had themselves experienced. Here,

[1] We shall have frequent occasions to notice the numerous varieties of rule, privileges, and local liberties which prevailed under the Roman Empire. The Romans seem to have scrupulously respected ancient rights and customs wherever possible, provided only the supreme sovereignty of Rome was recognised.

however, they were met by the startling information from Cæsarea. They were, however, prepared for it. They were Hellenistic Jews like St. Stephen. They had listened to his burning words, and had followed closely his epoch-making speeches whereby he confounded the Jews and clearly indicated the opening of a new era. But then God's dispensations seemed to have terminated his teaching and put a fatal end to the hopes which he had raised. Men then misread God's dealings with His servants, and interpreted His ways amiss. The death of Stephen seemed perhaps to some minds a visible condemnation of his views, when in reality it was the direct channel by which God would work out a wider propagation of them, as well as the conversion of the agent destined to diffuse them most powerfully. Apparent defeat is not always permanent disaster, whether in things temporal or things spiritual; nay, rather the temporary check may be the necessary condition of the final and glorious victory. So it was in this case, as the men of Cyprus and Cyrene proved, when the news of St. Peter's revelation and his decisive action arrived and they realised in action the principles of Catholic Christianity for which their loved teacher St. Stephen had died. And their brave action was soon followed by blessed success, by a rich harvest of souls: "The hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." Thus were laid the foundations of the headquarters, the mother Church of Gentile Christianity.

IV. Now we come to another step in the development. Tidings of the action taken at Antioch came to Jerusalem. The news must have travelled much the same road as that by which, as we have indicated, the story of St. Peter's action was carried to Antioch. The inter-

course between Jerusalem and Antioch was frequent enough by land or by sea; and no synagogue and no Jewish society was more liberal in its gifts towards the support of the supreme council and hierarchy at Jerusalem than the Jewish colony and its synagogues at Damascus. And the old custom of communication with Jerusalem naturally led the Nazarenes of Antioch to send word of their proceedings up to the apostles and supreme council who ruled their parent society in the same city. We see a clear indication that the events at Antioch happened subsequently to those at Cæsarea in the manner in which the news was received at Jerusalem. There seems to have been no strife, no discussion, no controversy. The question had been already raised and decided after St. Peter's return. So the apostles simply select a fitting messenger to go forth with the authority of the apostles and to complete the work which, having been initiated in baptism, merely now demanded that imposition of hands which, as we have seen in the case of the Samaritan converts, was one of the special functions of the apostles and chiefs of the Church at Jerusalem. And in choosing Barnabas the apostles made a wise choice. They did not send one of the original Twelve, because not one of them was fitted for the peculiar work now demanded. They were all narrow, provincial, untravelled, devoid of that wide and generous training which God had given to Barnabas. It may be too that they felt restrained from going beyond the bounds of Canaan before the twelve years had elapsed of which ancient Christian tradition tells as the limit of their stay in Jerusalem fixed by our Lord Himself.[1] He was a Hellenistic Jew, and he could sympathise with the wider feelings and ideas of

[1] See Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, v., 18.

the Hellenists. He was a man of Cyprus, a friend and perhaps connexion of many, both Jews and Gentiles, among those whose new-born faith and hope were now in question. And above all he was a man of kindly heart and genial temper and loving thought and blessed charity, fitted to soothe jealousies and allay suspicions, and make the long alienated and despised Gentiles feel at home in the Church and family of Jesus Christ. Barnabas was a person peculiarly fitted to prove a mediator and uniting link in a society where divergent elements found a place and asserted themselves. He was not the man to take a new step or to have decided the question of the admission of the Gentiles if it had not been already settled. He must have come therefore fortified by the authority of the apostles, and then, knowing right well what they approved, he was just the man to carry out the details of an arrangement requiring tact and skill and temper; though he was by no means suited to decide a great question on its own merits or to initiate any great movement. In the Church of God then, as in the Church of God still, there is a place and a work for the strong man of keen logic and vigorous intellect and profound thought. And there is too a place and a work for the man of loving heart and a charity which evermore delights in compromise. "Barnabas, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith; and much people was added unto the Lord." Barnabas had another virtue too. He knew his own weakness. He did not imagine like some men that he was specially strong where he was eminently weak. He felt his want of the active vigorous mind of his

friend of boyhood the new convert Saul. He knew where he was living in comparative obscurity and silence; so after a little experience of the atmosphere of Antioch he departed to Tarsus to seek for him and bring him back where a great work was awaiting his peculiar turn of mind. There is an ancient historian of Antioch who has preserved for us many stories about that city in these apostolic and even in much earlier ages. His name is John Malalas; he lived about six hundred years after Christ, but had access to many ancient documents and writers that are no longer known to us. He tells us many things about the primitive Church of Antioch. He has his own version of the quarrel between St. Paul and St. Peter which happened in that city; and he fixes even the very spot where St. Paul first preached, telling us that its name was Singon Street, which stood near the Pantheon. This may seem to us a minuteness of detail too great to be believed. But then we must remember that John Malalas expressly cites ancient chronologers and historians as his authorities, and he himself lived while as yet Antioch retained all the ancient arrangements of streets and divisions. And surely Saul, as he travelled from Tarsus responding at once to the call of Barnabas, must have seen enough to stir his love to Christ and to souls into heartiest exertion. He came doubtless by sea and landed at Seleucia, the port of Antioch, some sixteen miles distant from the city. As he travelled up to Antioch he would get distant glimpses of the groves of Daphne, a park ten miles in circumference, dedicated indeed to the poetic worship of Apollo, but dedicated also to the vilest purposes of wickedness intimately associated with that poetic worship. Poetry, whether ancient or modern, can be very

blessed, ennobling and elevating man's whole nature. But the same poetry, as in ancient paganism and in some modern writers, can become a festering plague-spot, the abounding source to its votaries of moral corruption and spiritual death.[1]

Daphne and its associations would rouse the whole soul, the healthy moral nature of Saul of Tarsus, inherited originally from his ancient Jewish training, and now quickened and deepened by the spiritual revelations made to him in Christ Jesus. It is no wonder then that here we read of St. Paul's first long and continuous period of ministerial work: "It came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered

[1] There is a good description of Daphne as St. Paul may have seen it in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxiii. We borrow a few extracts from it to give a more vivid idea of Antioch in St. Paul's day. "At the distance of five miles from Antioch the Macedonian kings of Syria had consecrated to Apollo one of the most elegant places of devotion in the pagan world. A magnificent temple rose in honour of the God of light; and his colossal figure almost filled the capacious sanctuary which was enriched with gold and gems and adorned by the skill of the Grecian artists. The deity was represented in a bending attitude, with a golden cup in his hand, pouring out a libation on the earth, as if he supplicated the venerable mother to give to his arms the cold and beauteous Daphne; for the spot was ennobled by fiction, and the fancy of the Syrian poets had transported the amorous tale from the banks of the Perseus to the town of the Orontes." "The temple and village were deeply bosomed in a thick grove of laurels and cypresses, which reached as far as a circumference of ten miles, and proved in the most sultry summers a cool and impenetrable shade. A thousand streams of the purest water, issuing from every hill, preserved the verdure of the earth and the temperature of the air; the senses were gratified with harmonious sounds and aromatic odours; and the peaceful grove was consecrated to health and joy, to luxury and love. The soldier and the philosopher wisely avoided the temptations of this sensual paradise, where pleasure, assuming the character of religion, imperceptibly dissolved the firmness of manly virtue." Gibbon's notes abound with ample proof of the statements he makes. To them we may refer the reader curious about the details of ancient paganism.

together with the Church, and taught much people." The results of the new force which Barnabas introduced into the spiritual life of Antioch soon became manifested. "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Saul of Tarsus possessed what Barnabas did not possess. He possessed a powerful, a logical, and a creative intellect. He realised from the beginning what his own principles meant and to what they were leading him. He taught not Judaism or the Law with an addition merely about Jesus of Nazareth. He troubled not himself about circumcision or the old covenant, but he taught from the very beginning Christ Jesus, Christ in His Divine and human nature, Christ in His various offices, Jesus Christ as the one hope for mankind. This was now at Antioch, as before at Damascus, the staple topic of St. Paul's preaching, and therefore the Antiochenes, with their ready wit and proverbial power of giving nicknames, at once designated the new sect not Nazarenes or Galileans as the Jews of Jerusalem called them, but Christians or adherents of Christ.[1] Here, however, I prefer to avail myself of the exposition which one of the great spiritual teachers of the last generation gave us of this expression. The well-known and learned Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Trench, in his *Study of Words* (21st Ed.: Lond. 1890),

[1] The Antiochenes were always famous for the dangerous power of ridicule and giving nicknames. They quarrelled on this account with the emperors Hadrian, Verus, Marcus, Severus, and Julian. The last mentioned has celebrated these tendencies in his celebrated treatise entitled *Misopogon, or the Beard-hater*. Even in its final overthrow the city preserved this distinction. In the year 540 the Persian king Chosroes Nushirvan took it by storm. When he appeared before the city he was received with a shower of arrows mingled with obscene sarcasms, which so enraged him that he removed the inhabitants when he had taken the town to a new Antioch in the province of Susa.

p. 189, thus draws out the lesson connected with this word and the time of its appearance: "'The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.' That we have here a notice which we would not willingly have missed all will acknowledge, even as nothing can be otherwise than curious which relates to the infancy of the Church. But there is here much more than a curious notice. Question it a little closer, and how much it will be found to contain, how much which it is waiting to yield up! What light it throws on the whole story of the Apostolic Church to know where and when this name of Christians was first imposed on the faithful; for imposed by adversaries it certainly was, not devised by themselves, however afterwards they may have learned to glory in it as the name of highest dignity and honour. They did not call themselves, but, as is expressly recorded, they 'were called' Christians first at Antioch; in agreement with which statement the name occurs nowhere in Scripture, except on the lips of those alien from or opposed to the faith (Acts xxvi. 28; 1 Peter iv. 16). And as it was a name imposed by adversaries, so among these adversaries it was plainly heathens, and not Jews, who were its authors; for Jews would never have called the followers of Jesus of Nazareth 'Christians,' or those of Christ, the very point of their opposition to Him being, that He was not the Christ, but a false pretender to the name. Starting then from this point that 'Christians' was a title given to the disciples by the heathen, what may we deduce from it further? At Antioch they first obtained this name—at the city, that is, which was the headquarters of the Church's mission to the heathen, in the same sense as Jerusalem had been the headquarters of the mission to the seed of

Abraham. It was there and among the faithful there that a conviction of the world-wide destination of the gospel arose; there it was first plainly seen as intended for all kindreds of the earth. Hitherto the faithful in Christ had been called by their adversaries, and indeed were often still called 'Galileans' or 'Nazarenes'—both names which indicated the Jewish cradle wherein the Church had been nursed, and that the world saw in the new society no more than a Jewish sect. But it was plain that the Church had now, even in the world's eyes, chipped its Jewish shell. The name Christians or those of Christ, while it told that Christ and the confession of Him was felt even by the heathen to be the sum and centre of this new faith, showed also that they comprehended now, not all which the Church would be, but something of this; saw this much, namely, that it was no mere sect and variety of Judaism, but a Society with a mission and a destiny of its own. Nor will the thoughtful reader fail to observe that the coming up of this name is by closest juxtaposition connected in the sacred narrative, and still more closely in the Greek than in the English, with the arrival at Antioch, and with the preaching there, of that Apostle who was God's appointed instrument for bringing the Church to a full sense that the message which it had was not for some men only, but for all. As so often happens with the rise of new names, the rise of this one marked a new epoch in the Church's life, and that it was entering upon a new stage of development." This is a long extract, but it sets forth in dignified and aptly chosen words, such as Archbishop Trench always used, the important lessons which the thoughtful student of the Acts may gather from

the time and place where the term "Christians" first sprang into existence.

Finally, we notice in connexion with Antioch that the foundation of the great Gentile Church was marked by the same universal impulse which we trace wherever Christ was effectually preached. The faith of the Crucified evermore produced love to the brethren. Agabus, a prophet whom we shall again meet many years after in the course of St. Paul's life, and who then predicted his approaching arrest and captivity at Jerusalem, made his earliest recorded appearance at Antioch, where he announced an impending famine. Agabus exercised the office of a prophet, which implied under the New Dispensation rather the office of preaching than of prediction. Prediction, indeed, whether under the Old or the New Dispensation, formed but a small portion of the prophetical office. The work of the prophet was pre-eminently that of telling forth God's will and enforcing it upon a careless generation. Occasionally indeed, as in the case of Agabus, that telling forth involved prediction or announcement of God's chastisements and visitations; but far oftener the prophet's work was finished when he enforced the great principles of truth and righteousness as the Christian preacher does still. Agabus seems to have been specially gifted in the direction of prediction. He announced a famine as impending over the whole world, which came to pass in the age of Claudius, offering to the Gentile Church of Antioch an opportunity, of which they gladly availed themselves, to repay somewhat of the spiritual obligation which the Gentiles owed to the Jews according to St. Paul's own rule: "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to

minister unto them in carnal things."[1] We can trace here the force and power of ancient Jewish customs. We can see how the mould and form and external shape of the Church was gained from the Jew. The Jewish colony of Antioch had been of old famous for the liberality of its gifts to the mother community at Jerusalem. The predominant element in the Church of Antioch was now Gentile, but still the ancient customs prevailed. The Gentile Christian community acted towards the Jerusalem Church as the Jewish community had been used to treat their countrymen: "The disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul."

[1] This famine is thoroughly historical. It is noticed by several who wrote of this time, as Dion, lx., 11; Suetonius, Claud., 20; Aurelius, Victor; and is confirmed by the testimony of the coins: see Eckhel, vi., 238, 239, 240. Cf. Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, p. 274, A.D. 42.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEFEAT OF PRIDE.

"Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. . . . Immediately an angel of the Lord smote Herod, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied."—ACTS xii. 1-3, 23-24.

THE chapter at which we have now arrived is very important from a chronological point of view, as it brings the sacred narrative into contact with the affairs of the external world concerning which we have independent knowledge. The history of the Christian Church and of the outside world for the first time clearly intersect, and we thus gain a fixed point of time to which we can refer. This chronological character of the twelfth chapter of the Acts arises from its introduction of Herod and the narrative of the second notable persecution which the Church at Jerusalem had to endure. The appearance of a Herod on the scene and the tragedy in which he was the actor demand a certain amount of historical explanation, for, as we have already noted in the case of St. Stephen five or six years previously, Roman procurators and Jewish priests and the Sanhedrin then possessed or at least used the power of the sword in Jerusalem, while a word had not been heard of a Herod exercising capital jurisdiction

in Judæa for more than forty years. Who was this Herod? Whence came he? How does he emerge so suddenly upon the stage? As great confusion exists in the minds of many Bible students about the ramifications of the Herodian family and the various offices and governments they held, we must make a brief digression in order to show who and whence this Herod was concerning whom we are told, "Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the Church."

This Herod Agrippa was a grandson of Herod the Great, and displayed in the solitary notice of him which Holy Scripture has handed down many of the characteristics, cruel, bloodthirsty and yet magnificent, which that celebrated sovereign manifested throughout his life.[1] The story of Herod Agrippa his grandson was a real romance. He made trial of every station in life. He had been at times a captive, at times a conqueror. He had at various periods experience of a prison house and of a throne. He had felt the depths of poverty, and had not known where to borrow money sufficient

[1] The Herodian family form a notable instance of the modern doctrine of heredity, which yet is only the ancient principle of Divine action announced long ago in the Second Commandment, "Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." The moral taints which we behold in Esau, passion, self-indulgence quenching all forethought, ostentation joined with magnificent generosity, displayed themselves in Herod the Great. In him they were joined with absolute power, and they produced their natural results. They made his heart, his life, his home a howling wilderness, and handed down to his descendants a legacy of wickedness which ceased not to bear fruit so long as his name survived. Herod's family cruelties were so celebrated that we are told by a pagan writer, named Macrobius, that when the Emperor Augustus heard of the slaughter of the innocents of Bethlehem, thinking they were Herod's children, he jokingly said, "were better to be Herod's pigs than Herod's children."

to pay his way to Rome. He had tasted of the sweetness of affluence, and had enjoyed the pleasures of magnificent living. He had been a subject and a ruler, a dependant on a tyrant, and the trusted friend and councillor of emperors. His story is worth telling. He was born about ten years before the Christian era, and was the son of Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod the Great. After the death of Herod, his grandfather, the Herodian family was scattered all over the world. Some obtained official positions; others were obliged to shift for themselves, depending on the fragments of the fortune which the great king had left them. Agrippa lived at Rome till about the year 30 A.D., associating with Drusus, the son of the Emperor Tiberius, by whom he was led into the wildest extravagance. He was banished from Rome about that year, and was obliged to retire to Palestine, contenting himself with the small official post of Ædile of Tiberias in Galilee, given him by his uncle Herod Antipas, which he held about the time when our Lord was teaching in that neighbourhood. During the next six years the fortunes of Agrippa were of the most chequered kind. He soon quarrelled with Antipas, and is next found a fugitive at the court of Antioch with the Prefect of the East. He there borrowed from a money-lender the sum of £800 at 12½ per cent. interest, to enable him to go to Rome and push his interests at the imperial court. He was arrested, however, for a large debt due to the Treasury just when he was embarking, and consigned to prison, whence the very next day he managed to escape, and fled to Alexandria. There he again raised another timely loan, and thus at last succeeded in getting to Rome. Agrippa attached himself to Caligula, the heir of the empire, and after various chances was appointed

by him King of Trachonitis, a dominion which Caligula and subsequently Claudius enlarged by degrees, till in the year 41 he was invested with the kingdom of the whole of Palestine, including Galilee, Samaria, and Judæa, of which Agrippa proceeded to take formal possession about twelve months before the events recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts.[1]

Herod's career had been marked by various changes, but in one respect he had been consistent. He was ever a thorough Jew, and a vigorous and useful friend to his fellow-countrymen. We have already noticed that his influence had been used with Caligula to induce the Emperor to forgo his mad project of erecting his statue in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem.[2] Herod had, however, one great drawback in the eyes of the priestly faction at Jerusalem. All the descendants of Herod the Great were tainted by their Edomite blood, which they inherited through him. Their kind offices and support were accepted indeed, but only grudgingly. Herod felt this, and it was quite natural therefore for the newly appointed king to strive to gain all the popularity he could with the dominant party at Jerusalem by persecuting the new sect which was giving them so much trouble. No incident could possibly have been more natural, more consistent with the facts of history, as well as with the known dispositions and tendencies of human nature, than that recorded in these words—"Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword." Herod's act was a very politic one

[1] See Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, A.D. 41, p. 271, for the authorities on the subject of Herod's career.

[2] See p. 95 above.

from a worldly point of view. It was a hard dose enough for the Jewish people to swallow, to find a king imposed upon them by an idolatrous Gentile power; but it was some alleviation of their lot that the king was a Jew, and a Jew so devoted to the service of the ruling hierarchy that he was willing to use his secular power to crush the troublesome Nazarene sect whose doctrine threatened for ever to destroy all hopes of a temporal restoration for Israel. Such being the historical setting of the picture presented to us, let us apply ourselves to the spiritual application and lessons of this incident in apostolic history. We have here a martyrdom, a deliverance, and a Divine judgment, which will all repay careful study.

I. A martyrdom is here brought under our notice, and that the first martyrdom among the apostles. Stephen's was the first Christian martyrdom, but that of James was the first apostolic martyrdom. When Herod, following his grandfather's footsteps, would afflict the Church, "he killed James the brother of John with the sword." We must carefully distinguish between two martyrs of the same name who have both found a place in the commemorations of Christian hope and love. May-day is the feast devoted to the memory of St. Philip and St. James, July 25th is the anniversary consecrated to the memorial of St. James the Apostle, whose death is recorded in the passage now under consideration. The latter was the brother of John and son of Zebedee; the former was the brother or cousin according to the flesh of our Lord. St. James the Apostle perished early in the Church's history. St. James the Just flourished for more than thirty years after the Resurrection. He lived indeed to a comparatively advanced period of the

Church's history, as is manifest from a study of the Epistle which he wrote to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion. He there rebukes shortcomings and faults, respect for the rich and contempt of the poor, oppression and outrage and irreverence, which could never have found place in that first burst of love and devotion to God which the age of our Herodian martyr witnessed, but must have been the outcome of long years of worldly prosperity and ease. James the Just, the stern censor of Christian morals and customs, whose language indeed in its severity has at times caused one-sided and narrow Christians much trouble, must often have looked back with regret and longing to the pure days of charity and devotion when James the brother of John perished by the sword of Herod.

Again, we notice about this martyred apostle that, though there is very little told us concerning his life and actions, he must have been a very remarkable man. He was clearly remarkable for his Christian privileges. He was one of the apostles specially favoured by our Lord. He was admitted by Him into the closest spiritual converse. Thus we find that, with Peter and John, James the Apostle was one of the three selected by our Lord to behold the first manifestion of His power over the realms of the dead when He restored the daughter of Jairus to life; with the same two, Peter and John, he was privileged to behold our Saviour receive the first foretaste of His heavenly glory upon the Mount of Transfiguration; and with them too he was permitted to behold his great Master drink the first draught of the cup of agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. James the Apostle had thus the first necessary qualification for an eminent worker in the Lord's vineyard. He had been admitted into Christ's most

intimate friendship, he knew much of his Lord's will and mind. And the privileges thus conferred upon St. James had not been misused or neglected. He did not hide his talent in the dust of idleness, nor wrap it round with the mantle of sloth. He utilised his advantages. He became a foremost, if not indeed the foremost worker for his loved Lord in the Church of Jerusalem, as is intimated by the opening words of this passage, which tells us that when Herod wished to harass and vex the Church he selected James the brother of John as his victim; and we may be sure that with the keen instinct of a persecutor Herod selected not the least prominent and useful, but the most devoted and energetic champion of Christ to satisfy his cruel purpose. And yet, though James was thus privileged and thus faithful and thus honoured by God, his active career is shrouded thick round with clouds and darkness. We know nothing of the good works and brave deeds and powerful sermons he devoted to his Master's cause. We are told simply of the death by which he glorified God. All else is hidden with God till that day when the secret thoughts and deeds of every man shall be revealed. This incident in early Apostolic Church history is a very typical one, and teaches many a lesson very necessary for these times and for all times. If an apostle so privileged and so faithful was content to do his work, and then to pass away without a single line of memorial, a single word to keep his name or his labours fresh among men, how much more may we, petty, faithless, trifling as we are, be contented to do our duty, and to pass away without any public recognition! And yet how we all do crave after such recognition! How intensely we long for human praise and approval! How useless we esteem our labours

unless they are followed by it! How inclined we are to make the fallible judgment of man the standard by which we measure our actions, instead of having the mind's eye ever steadily fixed as James the brother of John had on His approval alone who, now seeing our secret trials, struggles, efforts, will one day reward His faithful followers openly! This is one great lesson which this typical passage by its silence as well as by its speech clearly teaches the Church of every age.[1]

Again, this martyrdom of St. James proclaims yet another lesson. God hereby warns the Church against the idolatry of human agents, against vain trust in human support. Let us consider the circumstances of the Church at that time. The Church had just passed through a season of violent persecution, and had lost one of its bravest and foremost soldiers in the person of Stephen, the martyred deacon. And now there was impending over the Church what is often more trying far than a time short and sharp of violence and blood, —a period of temporal distress and suffering, trying the principles and testing the endurance of the weaker brethren in a thousand petty trifles. It was a time when the courage, the wisdom, the experience of the tried and trusted leaders would be specially required to guide the Church amid the many new problems

[1] The tradition of the second century has only one story to tell about this martyrdom. We find it in Eusebius, *H. E.*, ii., 9, where we read: "Concerning this James Clement hands down a story worthy of remembrance in the seventh book of his Hypotyposes (or Outlines) delivering it from the traditions of his predecessors, that the messenger who led him to the judgment-seat, beholding his witness, was moved to confess himself a Christian. Both were therefore led away, says he, and on the road (to execution) he asked forgiveness from James. And he, having considered for a little, said, Peace be to thee, and he kissed him tenderly. And thus both were beheaded together."

which day by day were cropping up. And yet it was just then, at such a crisis, that the Lord permits the bloody sword of Herod to be stretched forth, and removes one of the very chiefest champions of the Christian host just when his presence seemed most necessary. It must have appeared a dark and trying dispensation to the Church of that day; but though attended doubtless with some present drawbacks and apparent disadvantages, it was well and wisely done to warn the Church of every age against mere human dependence, mere temporal refuges; teaching by a typical example that it is not by human might or earthly wisdom, not by the eloquence of man or the devices of earth that Christ's Church and people must be saved; that it is by His own right hand, and by His own holy arm alone our God will get Himself the victory.

Yet again we may learn from this incident another lesson rich laden with comfort and instruction. This martyrdom of St. James throws us back upon a circumstance which occurred during our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem before His crucifixion, and interprets it for us. Let us recall it. Our Lord was going up to Jerusalem, and His disciples were following Him with wondering awe. The shadow of the Cross projecting itself forward made itself unconsciously felt throughout the little company, and men were astonished, though they knew not why. They simply felt, as men do on a close sultry summer's day when a thunderstorm is overhead, that something awful was impending. They had, however, a vague feeling that the kingdom of God would shortly appear, and so the mother of Zebedee's children, with all that boldness which affection lends to feminine minds, drew near and strove to secure a boon before all others for her own children. She prayed

that to her two sons might be granted the posts of honour in the temporal kingdom she thought of as now drawing so very near. The Lord replied to her request in very deep and far-reaching language, the meaning of which she then understood not, but learned afterwards through the discipline of pain and sorrow and death: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" And then, when James and John had professed their ability, he predicts their future fate: "My cup indeed ye shall drink." The mother and the sons alike spoke bold words, and offered a sincere but an ignorant prayer. Little indeed did the mother dream as she presented her petition—"Command that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand in Thy kingdom"—how that prayer would be answered, and yet answered it was. To the one son, James, was granted the one post of honour. He was made to sit on the Master's right hand, for he was the first of the apostles called to enter into Paradise through a baptism of blood. While to the other son, St. John, was granted the other post of honour, for he was left the longest upon earth to guide, direct, and sustain the Church by his inspired wisdom, large experience, and apostolic authority.[1] The contrast between the prayer offered up to Christ in ignorance and shortsightedness and the

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, in his celebrated essay on the Christian Ministry, *Philippians*, pp. 200—205, 2nd edition, regards Episcopacy as the work of St. John. "By whom was the new constitution organised? To this question only one answer can be given. This great work must be ascribed to the surviving apostles. St. John especially, who built up the speculative theology of the Church, was mainly instrumental in completing its external constitution also, for Asia Minor was the centre from which the new movement spread." These words occur in his analysis of Rothe's views, with which Dr. Lightfoot substantially agrees.

manner in which the same prayer was answered in richest abundance suggests to us the comforting reflection that no prayer offered up in sincerity and truth is ever really left unanswered. We may indeed never *see* how the prayer is answered. The mother of St. James may little have dreamt as she beheld her son's lifeless body brought home to her that this trying dispensation was a real answer to her ambitious petition. But we can now see that it was so, and can thus learn a lesson of genuine confidence, of holy boldness, of strong faith in the power of sincere and loving communion with God. Let us only take care to cultivate the same spirit of genuine humility and profound submission which possessed the souls of those primitive Christians enabling them to say, no matter how their petitions were answered, whether in joy or sorrow, in smiles or tears, in riches or poverty, "Not my will, but thine, O Lord, be done."

II. We have again in this twelfth chapter the record of a Divine deliverance. Herod, seeing that the Jewish authorities were pleased because they had now a sympathetic ruler who understood their religious troubles and was resolved to help in quelling them, determined to proceed farther in the work of repression. He arrested another prominent leader, St. Peter, and cast him into prison. The details are given to us of Herod's action and Peter's arrest. Peter was now making his first acquaintance with Roman methods of punishment. He had been indeed previously arrested and imprisoned, but his arrest had been carried out by the Jewish authorities, and he had been consigned to the care of the Temple police, and had occupied the Temple prison. But Herod, though a strict Jew in religion, had been thoroughly Romanised in matters of rule and government, and therefore he treated St.

Peter after the Roman fashion: "When he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people." He was delivered to sixteen men, who divided the night into four watches, four men watching at a time, after the Roman method of discipline.[1] And then, in contrast to all this preparation, we are told how the Church betook herself to her sure refuge and strong tower of defence: "Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made earnestly of the Church unto God for him." These early Christians had not had their faith limited or weakened by discussions whether petition for temporal blessings were a proper subject of prayer, or whether spiritual blessings did not alone supply true matter for supplication before the Divine throne. They were in the first fervour of Christian love, and they did not theorise, define, or debate about prayer and its efficacy. They only knew that their Master had told them to pray, and had promised to answer sincere prayer, as He alone knew how; and so they gathered themselves in instant ceaseless prayer at the foot of the throne of grace. I say "ceaseless" prayer because it seems that the Jerusalem Church, feeling its danger, organised a continuous service of prayer. "Prayer was made earnestly of the Church unto God for him" is the statement of the fifth verse, and then when St. Peter was released "he came to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together and were praying," though the night must have been far advanced. The crisis was a terrible one; the foremost

[1] These elaborate precautions were doubtless taken on account of his escape on the previous occasion, when the Sanhedrin had arrested him, as narrated in the nineteenth verse of the fifth chapter.

champion, St. James, had been taken, and now another great leader was threatened, and therefore the Church flung herself at the feet of the Master seeking deliverance, and was not disappointed, as the Church has never since been disappointed when she has cast herself in lowliness and profound submission before the same holy sanctuary.[1] The narrative then proceeds to give us the particulars of St. Peter's deliverance, as St. Peter himself seems to have told it to St. Luke, for we have details given us which could only have come either directly or indirectly from the person most immediately concerned. But of these we shall treat in a little. The story now introduces the supernatural, and for the believer this is quite in keeping with the facts of the case. A great crisis in the history of the Jerusalem Church has arrived. The mother Church of all Christendom, the fountain and source of original Christianity, is threatened with extinction. The life of the greatest existing leader of that Church is at stake, and that before his work is done. The very existence of the Christian revelation seems imperilled, and God sends forth an angel, a heavenly messenger, to rescue His endangered servant, and to prove to unbelieving Jew, to the haughty Herod, and to the frightened but praying disciples alike the care which He ever exercises over His Church and people. Here,

[1] In the fifth century an order of monks was established at Constantinople who practised this ceaseless worship. They were called Acoimetæ, or the Watchers. They are described at length in Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book VII., ch. ii., sect. 10, and in Smith's *Dict. Christ. Antiqq.*, vol. i., p. 13. A similar attempt was made in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. by the well-known Nicholas Ferrar in a monastic institution which he planned in connection with the Church of England: see the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* upon his name.

however, a question may be raised. How was it that an angel, a supernatural messenger, was despatched to the special rescue of St. Peter? Why was not the same assistance vouchsafed to St. James who had just been put to death? Why was not the same assistance vouchsafed to St. Peter himself when he was martyred at Rome, or to St. Paul when he lay in the dungeon in the same city of Rome or at Cæsarea? Simply, we reply, because God's hour was not yet come and the Apostle's work was not yet done. St. James's work was done, and therefore the Lord did not immediately interfere, or rather He summoned His servant to His assigned post of honour by the ministry of Herod. The wrath of man became the instrument whereby the praises of God were chanted and the soul of the righteous conveyed to its appointed place. The Lord did not interfere when St. Paul was cast into the prison house at Cæsarea, or St. Peter incarcerated in the Roman dungeon, because they had then a great work to do in showing how His servants can suffer as well as work. But now St. Peter had many a long year of active labour before him and much work to do as the Apostle of the Circumcision in preventing that schism with which the diverse parties and opposing ideas of Jew and Gentile threatened the infant Church, in smoothing over and reconciling the manifold oppositions, jealousies, difficulties, misunderstandings, which ever attend such a season of transition and transformation as now was fast dawning upon the Divine society. The arrest of St. Peter and his threatened death was a great crisis in the history of the primitive Church. St. Peter's life was very precious to the existence of that Church, it was very precious for the welfare of mankind at large, and so it was a fitting time for God

to raise up a banner against triumphant pride and worldly force by the hand of a supernatural messenger.

The steps by which St. Peter was delivered are all of them full of edification and comfort. Let us mark them. "When Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison." It was on that fateful night the same as when the angels descended on the Resurrection morning: the guards were in their rightful place and discharging their accustomed duties, but when God intervenes then human precautions are all useless. The words of the narrative are striking in their quiet dignity. There is no working up of details. There is no pandering to mere human curiosity. Everything is in keeping with the sustained force, sublimity, elevation which we ever behold in the Divine action. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers; one chained to each arm, so that he could not move without awaking them. He was sleeping profoundly and calmly, because he felt himself in the hands of an Almighty Father who will order everything for the best. The interior rest amid the greatest trials which an assured confidence like that enjoyed by St. Peter can confer is something marvellous, and has not been confined to apostolic times. Our Lord's servants have in every age proved the same wondrous power. I know of course that criminals are often said to enjoy a profound sleep the night before their execution. But then habitual criminals and hardened murderers have their spiritual natures so completely overmastered and dominated by their lower material powers that they realise nothing beyond the present. They are little better than the beasts which perish, and think as little of the future

as they do. But persons with highly strung nervous powers, who realise the awful change impending over them, cannot be as they, specially if they have no such sure hope as that which sustained St. Peter. He slept calmly here as Paul and Silas rejoiced in the Philippian prison house, as the Master Himself slept calmly in the stern of the wave-rocked boat on the Galilean lake, because he knew himself to be reposing in the arms of Everlasting Love, and this knowledge bestowed upon him a sweet and calm repose at the moment of supreme danger of which the fevered children of time know nothing.

And now all the circumstances of the celestial visit are found to be most suitable and becoming. The angel stood by Peter. A light shined in the cell, because light is the very element in which these heavenly beings spend their existence. The chains which bind St. Peter fell off without any effort human or angelic, just as in a few moments the great gate of the prison opened of its own accord, because all these things, bonds and bolts and bars, derive all their coercive power from the will of God, and when that will changes or is withdrawn they cease to be operative, or become the instruments of the very opposite purpose, assisting and not hindering His servants. Then the angel's actions and directions are characteristic in their dignified vigour. He told the awakened sleeper to act promptly: "He smote him on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly." But there is no undue haste. As on the Resurrection morning the napkin that was upon Christ's head was found not lying with the rest of the grave-cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself, so too on this occasion the angel shows minute care for Peter's personal appearance. There must be nothing undigni-

fied, careless, untidy even, about the dress of the rescued apostle: "Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals." St. Peter had naturally laid aside his external garments, had unloosed his inner robes, and taken off his sandals when preparing for sleep. Nothing, however, escapes the heavenly messenger, and so he says, "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me," referring to the loose upper robe or overcoat which the Jews wore over their underclothes; and then the angel led him forth, teaching the Church the perpetual lesson that external dignity of appearance is evermore becoming to God's people, when not even an angel considered these things beneath his notice amid all the excitement of a midnight rescue, nor did the inspired writer omit to record such apparently petty details. Nothing about St. Peter was too trivial for the angel's notice and direction, as again nothing in life is too trivial for the sanctifying and elevating care of our holy religion. Dress, food, education, marriage, amusements, all of life's work and of life's interests, are the subject-matter whereon the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ and taught by the ministry of His Church are to find their due scope and exercise.[1]

[1] The early Church has left us a treatise showing how thoroughly it recognised its duty in this respect. The "Pædagogue" or the "Instructor" of Clement of Alexandria is a handbook of the social life of the early Christians, teaching them what to do and wear and say under every conceivable circumstance. Clement thinks nothing too trivial for the rule of Christian principle, prescribing the kind of clothes, shoes, and beds which should be used. He may seem at times to border on the ludicrous in his minuteness; but then we cannot realise how profoundly paganism had corrupted human life and manners. Thus in Book III., ch. xi., he treats of the management of the hair by men. Paganism had introduced many sensual practices in this direction. Clement lays down: "Let the head of men be shaven, unless it has curly hair. But let the chin have the hair. But let not twisted locks hang far down

Peter's deliverance was now complete. The angel conducted him through one street to assure him that he was really free and secure him from bewilderment, and then departed. The Apostle thereupon sought out the well-known centre of Christian worship, "the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark," where stood the upper chamber, honoured as no other upper chamber had ever been. There he made known his escape, and then retired to some secret place where Herod could not find him, remaining there concealed till Herod was dead and direct Roman law and authority were once more in operation at Jerusalem.[1] There are two or three details in this narrative that are deserving of special notice, as showing that St. Luke received the story most probably from St. Peter himself. These touches are expressions of St. Peter's inner thoughts, which could have been known only to St. Peter, and must have been derived from him. Thus we are told about his state of mind when the angel appeared: "He wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision." Again, after his deliverance, we are told of the thoughts

from the head gliding into womanish ringlets. . . . Since cropping is to be adopted, not on account of elegance, but for the necessity of the case; the hair of the head, that it may not grow so long as to come down and interfere with the eyes, and that of the moustache similarly which is dirtied in eating, is to be cut round, not by a razor, for that were unbecoming, but by a pair of cropping scissors. But the hair on the chin is not to be disturbed, as it gives no trouble, and lends to the face dignity and paternal terror." This treatise of a very early Christian writer can be easily consulted in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library.

[1] There is an ancient tradition that our Lord bade the apostles remain twelve years in Jerusalem before they dispersed to preach the gospel all the world over (Eusebius, *H. E.*, V., xviii.). Some think that the famine and persecution which now happened may have been the occasion of their dispersion.

which passed through his mind, the words which rose to his lips when he found himself once again a free man: "When Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth that the Lord hath sent forth His angel, and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.' While, again, how true to life and to the female nature is the incident of the damsel Rhoda! She came across the courtyard to hearken and see who was knocking at the outer gate at that late hour: "When she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in and told that Peter stood before the gate." We behold the impulsiveness of the maid. She quite forgot the Apostle's knocking at the gate in her eager desire to convey the news to his friends. And, again, how true to nature their scepticism! They were gathered praying for Peter's release, but so little did they expect an answer to their prayers that, when the answer does come, and in the precise way that they were asking for it and longing for it, they are astonished, and tell the maid-servant who bore the tidings, "Thou art mad." We pray as the primitive Church did, and that constantly; but is it not with us as with them? We pray indeed, but we do not expect our prayers to be answered, and therefore we do not profit by them as we might.

Such were the circumstances of St. Peter's deliverance, which was a critical one for the Church. It struck a blow at Herod's new policy of persecution unto death; it may have induced him to depart from Jerusalem and descend to Cæsarea, where he met his end, leaving the Church at Jerusalem in peace; and the deliverance must have thrown a certain marvellous halo round St. Peter when he appeared again at

Jerusalem, enabling him to occupy a more prominent position without any fear for his life.

III. We have also recorded in this chapter a notable defeat of pride, ostentation, and earthly power. The circumstances are well known. Herod, vexed perhaps by his disappointment in the matter of Peter, went down to Cæsarea, which his grandfather had magnificently adorned. But he had other reasons too. He had a quarrel with the men of Tyre and Sidon, and he would take effective measures against them. Tyre and Sidon were great seaports and commercial towns, but their country did not produce food sufficient for the maintenance of its inhabitants, just as England, the emporium of the world's commerce, is obliged to depend for its food supplies upon other and distant lands.[1] The men of Tyre and Sidon were not, however, unacquainted with the ways of Eastern courts. They bribed the king's chamberlain, and Herod was appeased. There was another motive which led Herod to Cæsarea. It was connected with his Roman experience and with his courtier-life. The Emperor Claudius Cæsar was his friend and patron. To him Herod owed his restoration to the rich dominions of his grandfather. That emperor had gone in the previous year, A.D. 43, to conquer Britain. He spent six months in our northern regions in Gaul and Britain, and then, when smitten by the cold blasts of midwinter, he fled to the south again, as so many of

[1] It is noteworthy, indeed, that it was with Tyre and Sidon in the days of Herod as it was with them in the earlier days of King Solomon and of the prophets. In 1 Kings v. 10, 11 we see that Hiram, king of Tyre, depended on Solomon for food: "So Hiram gave Solomon timber of cedar and timber of fir according to all his desire. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year"; with which may be compared Ezekiel xxvii. 17.

our own people do now. He arrived in Rome in the January of the year 44, and immediately ordered public games to be celebrated in honour of his safe return, assuming as a special name the title Britannicus. These public shows were imitated everywhere throughout the empire as soon as the news of the Roman celebrations arrived. The tidings would take two or three months to arrive at Palestine, and the Passover may have passed before Herod heard of his patron's doings. Jewish scruples would not allow him to celebrate games after the Roman fashion at Jerusalem, and for this purpose therefore he descended to the Romanised city of Cæsarea, where all the appliances necessary for that purpose were kept in readiness. There is thus a link which binds together the history of our own nation and this interesting incident in early Christian history. The games were duly celebrated, but they were destined to be Herod's last act. On an appointed day he sat in the theatre of Cæsarea to receive the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon. He presented himself early in the morning to the sight of the multitude clad in a robe of silver which flashed in the light reflecting back the rays of the early sun and dazzling the mixed multitude—supple, crafty Syrians, paganised Samaritans, self-seeking and worldly-wise Phœnicians. He made a speech in response to the address of the envoys, and then the flattering shout arose, "The voice of a god, and not of a man." Whereupon the messenger of God smote Herod with that terrible form of disease which accompanies unbounded self-indulgence and luxury, and the proud tyrant learned what a plaything of time, what a mere creature of a day is a king as much as a beggar, as shown by the narrative preserved by Josephus of this event. He tells us

that, when seized by the mortal disease, Herod looked upon his friends, and said, "I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death."[1] What

[1] The story of the death of Herod Agrippa as told by Josephus, *Antiqq.*, Book XIX., ch. viii., is in striking unison with that given in the Acts. "Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cæsarea, formerly called Strato's Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honour of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated on account of his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principa persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated by the fresh reflexion of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a terror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god; and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us; for though we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterwards looked up he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him, and fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his stomach, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, 'I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept of what Providence allots, as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner.' When he said this his pain became violent, and he was carried into the palace." The reference to the owl relates to a story about Agrippa's earlier life told by Josephus in his *Antiqq.*, Book XVIII., ch. vi. The Emperor Tiberius had bound Agrippa, and placed him in his purple garments opposite his palace, with a number of other prisoners, among whom was a German. An

a striking picture of life's changes and chances, and of the poetic retributions we at times behold in the course of God's Providence! One short chapter of the Acts shows us Herod triumphant side by side with Herod laid low, Herod smiting apostles with the sword side by side with Herod himself smitten to death by the Divine sword. A month's time may have covered all the incidents narrated in this chapter. But, short as the period was, it must have been rich in support and consolation to the apostles Saul and Barnabas, who were doubtless deeply interested spectators of the rapidly shifting scene, telling them clearly of the heavenly watch exercised over the Church. They had come up from Antioch, bringing alms to render aid to their afflicted brethren in Christ. The famine, as we have just now seen from the anxiety of the men of Tyre and Sidon to be on friendly terms with Herod, was rapidly making itself felt throughout Palestine and the adjacent lands, and so the deputies of the Antiochene Church hurried up to Jerusalem with the much-needed gifts.[1] It may indeed be said, how could St. Paul hope to escape at such a time? Would it not have been madness for him to risk his safety in a city where he had once been so well known? But, then, we must remember that it was at the Passover

owl perched on a tree near Agrippa, whereupon the German predicted that he would be freed from his bonds, and be raised to highest station; but that when he saw the owl again his death would be only five days distant.

[1] The Jews themselves received at the same time the support of their foreign proselytes. Helena, Queen of Adiabene, sent liberal gifts to Jerusalem to support the famine-stricken multitudes of that city, as Josephus tells in his *Antiquities*, XX., ii., 5. Cf. Lewin's *Life of St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 108, where the reader will find engravings of her mausoleum as it is still to be seen at Jerusalem.

season Saul and Barnabas went from Antioch to Jerusalem. Vast crowds then entered the Holy City, and a solitary Jew or two from Antioch might easily escape notice among the myriads which then assembled from all quarters. St. Paul enjoyed too a wondrous measure of the Spirit's guidance, and that Spirit told him that he had yet much work to do for God. The Apostle had wondrous prudence joined with wondrous courage, and we may be sure that he took wisest precautions to escape the sword of Herod which would have so eagerly drunk his blood. He remained in Jerusalem all the time of the Passover. His clear vision of the spiritual world must then have been most precious and most sustaining. All the apostles were doubtless scattered; James was dead, and Peter doomed to death. The temporal troubles, famine and poverty, which called Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, brought with them corresponding spiritual blessings, as we still so often find, and the brave words of the chosen vessel, the Vas Electionis, aided by the sweet gifts of the Son of Consolation, may have been very precious and very helpful to those deepest souls in the Jerusalem Church who gathered themselves for continuous prayer in the house of Mary the mother of John, teaching them the true character, the profound views, the genuine religion of one whose earlier life had been so very different and whose later views may have been somewhat suspected. Saul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem at a terrible crisis, they saw the crisis safely passed, and then they returned to an atmosphere freer and broader than that of Jerusalem, and there in the exercise of a devoted ministry awaited the further manifestation of the Divine purposes.

CHAPTER IX.

ST. PAUL'S ORDINATION AND FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR.

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. . . . But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down." —ACTS xiii. 2-4, 14.

"And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. . . . They sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled."—ACTS xiv. 1, 26.

WE have now arrived at what we might call the watershed of the Acts of the Apostles. Hitherto we have had very various scenes, characters, personages to consider. Henceforth St. Paul, his labours, his disputes, his speeches, occupy the entire field, and every other name that is introduced into the narrative plays a very subordinate part. This is only natural. St. Luke knew of the earlier history by information gained from various persons, but he knew of the later history, and specially of St. Paul's journeys, by personal experience. He could say that he had formed a portion and played no small part in the work of which he was telling, and therefore St. Paul's activity

naturally supplies the chief subject of his narrative. St. Luke in this respect was exactly like ourselves. What we take an active part in, where our own powers are specially called into operation, there our interest is specially aroused. St. Luke personally knew of St. Paul's missionary journeys and labours, and therefore when telling Theophilus of the history of the Church down to the year 60 or thereabouts, he deals with that part of it which he specially knows. This limitation of St. Luke's vision limits also our range of exposition. The earlier portion of the Acts is much richer from an expositor's point of view, comprises more typical narratives, scenes, events than the latter portion, though this latter portion may be richer in points of contact, historical and geographical, with the world of life and action.

It is with an expositor or preacher exactly the opposite as with the Church historian or biographer of St. Paul. A writer gifted with the exuberant imagination, the minute knowledge of a Rénan or a Farrar naturally finds in the details of travel with which the latter portion of the Acts is crowded matter for abundant discussion. He can pour forth the treasures of information which modern archæological research has furnished shedding light upon the movements of the Apostle. But with the preacher or expositor it is otherwise. There are numerous incidents which lend themselves to his purpose in the journeys recorded in this latter portion of the book; but while a preacher might find endless subjects for spiritual exposition in the conversion of St. Paul or the martyrdom of St. Stephen, he finds himself confined to historical and geographical discussions in large portions of the story dealing with St. Paul's journeys. We

shall, however, strive to unite both functions, and while endeavouring to treat the history from an expositor's point of view, we shall not overlook details of another type which will impart colour and interest to the exposition.

I. The thirteenth chapter of the Acts records the opening of St. Paul's official missionary labours, and its earliest verses tell us of the formal separation or consecration for that work which St. Paul received. Now the question may here be raised, Why did St. Paul receive such a solemn ordination as that we here read of? Had he not been called by Christ immediately? Had he not been designated to the work in Gentile lands by the voice of the same Jesus Christ speaking to Ananias at Damascus and afterwards to Paul himself in the Temple at Jerusalem? What was the necessity for such a solemn external imposition of hands as that here recorded? John Calvin, in his commentary on this passage, offers a very good suggestion, and shows that he was able to throw himself back into the feelings and ideas of the times far better than many a modern writer. Calvin thinks that this revelation of the Holy Ghost and this ordination by the hands of the Antiochene prophets were absolutely necessary to complete the work begun by St. Peter at Cæsarea, and for this reason. The prejudices of the Jewish Christians against their Gentile brethren were so strong, that they would regard the vision at Joppa as applying, not as a general rule, but as a mere personal matter, authorising the reception of Cornelius and his party alone. They would not see nor understand that it authorised the active evangelisation of the Gentile world and the prosecution of aggressive Christian efforts among the heathen. The Holy Ghost therefore, as the abiding and guiding

power in the Church, and expressing His will through the agency of the prophets then present, said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"; and that work to which they were expressly sent forth by the Holy Ghost was the work of aggressive effort beginning with the Jews—but not terminating with them—and including the Gentiles. This seems to me thoroughly true, and shows how Calvin realised the intellectual weakness, the spiritual hardness of heart and slowness of judgment which prevailed among the apostles. The battle of Christian freedom and of catholic truth was not won in a moment. Old prejudices did not depart in an hour. New principles were not assimilated and applied in a few days. Those who hold nobler views and higher principles than the crowd must not be surprised or dismayed if they find that year after year they have to fight the same battles and to proclaim the same fundamental truths and to maintain what may seem at times even a losing conflict with the forces of unreasoning prejudices. If this was the case in the primitive Church with all its unity and love and spiritual gifts, we may well expect the same state of affairs in the Church of our time.[1]

An illustration borrowed from Church history will explain this. Nothing can well be more completely

[1] One great lesson which the true expositor will derive from this typical history is this, the long, doubtful, painful strife which the battle of truth and justice ever involves. The struggle for Gentile freedom waged by St. Paul is typical of the battle for freedom of conscience, for freedom of knowledge, for human rights against slavery, and of every other battle against tyranny and wrong which the world has ever seen. The combat has ever been long and wearisome, and the chiefest of God's champions have always been compelled to suffer much for their support of the truth, which must, however, triumph in the long run.

contrary to the spirit of Christianity than religious persecution. Nothing can be imagined more completely consonant with the spirit of the Christian religion than freedom of conscience. Yet how hard has been the struggle for it! The early Christians suffered in defence of religious freedom, but they had no sooner gained the battle than they adopted the very principle against which they had fought. They became religiously intolerant, because religious intolerance was part and parcel of the Roman state under which they had been reared. The Reformation again was a battle for religious freedom. If it were not, the Reformers who suffered in it would have no more claim to our compassion and sympathy on account of the deaths they suffered than soldiers who die in battle. A soldier merely suffers what he is prepared to inflict, and so it was with the martyrs of the Reformation unless theirs was a struggle for religious freedom. Yet no sooner had the battle of the Reformation been won than all the Reformed Churches adopted the very principle which had striven to crush themselves. It is terribly difficult to emancipate ourselves from the influence and ideas of bygone ages, and so it was with the Jewish Christians. They could not bring themselves to adopt missionary work among the Gentiles. They believed indeed intellectually that God had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life, but that belief was not accompanied with any of the enthusiasm which alone lends life and power to mental conceptions. The Holy Ghost therefore, as the Paraclete, the loving Comforter, Exhorter, and Guide of the Church, interposes afresh, and by a new revelation ordains apostles whose great work shall consist in preaching to the Gentile world.

This seems to me one great reason for the prominent place this incident at Antioch holds. The work of Gentile conversion proceeded from Antioch, which may therefore well be regarded as the mother Church of Gentile Christendom; and the apostles of the Gentiles were there solemnly set apart and constituted. Barnabas and Saul were not previously called apostles. Henceforth this title is expressly applied to them,[1] and independent apostolic action is taken by them. But there seems to me another reason why Barnabas and Saul were thus solemnly set apart, notwithstanding all their previous gifts and callings and history. The Holy Ghost wished to lay down at the very beginning of the Gentile Church the law of orderly development, the rule of external ordination, and the necessity for its perpetual observance. And therefore He issued His mandate for their visible separation to the work of evangelisation. All the circumstances too are typical. The Church was engaged in a season of special devotion when the Holy Ghost spoke. A special blessing was vouchsafed, as before at Pentecost, when the people of God were specially waiting upon Him. The Church at Antioch as represented by its leading teachers were fasting and praying and ministering to the Lord when

[1] See, for instance, ch. xiv. 4: "Part held with the Jews and part with the apostles"; and again, verse 14: "But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it." It must be remembered that the term apostle was one used very freely among the Jews to signify the official delegates of the high priest, the Sanhedrin, or even the smallest synagogue. It has, however, gained a sanctity and special application in the Christian Church which causes a certain amount of mental confusion. At the same time, we must remember that the title apostle was continued in the primitive Church after the age of the Twelve. It was applied to their successors, as we learn from the *Didache*, xi.; *Hermas*, Sim. ix.; 15, 16, 25. Cf. Origen on John iv., and Euseb., *H. E.*, i. 12.

the Divine mandate was issued, and then they fasted and prayed again. The ordination of the first apostles to the Gentiles was accompanied by special prayer and by fasting, and the Church took good care afterwards to follow closely this primitive example. The institution of the four Ember seasons as times for solemn ordinations is derived from this incident. The Ember seasons are periods for solemn prayer and fasting, not only for those about to be ordained, but also for the whole Church, because she recognises that the whole body of Christ's people are interested most deeply and vitally in the nature and character of the Christian ministry. If the members of that ministry are devoted, earnest, inspired with Divine love, then indeed the work of Christ flourishes in the Church, while if the ministry of God be careless and unspiritual, the people of God suffer terrible injury. And we observe, further, that not only the Church subsequent to the apostolic age followed this example at Antioch, but St. Paul himself followed it and prescribed it to his disciples. He ordained elders in every Church, and that from the beginning. He acted thus on his very first missionary journey, ordaining by the imposition of hands accompanied with prayer and fasting, as we learn from the fourteenth chapter and twenty-third verse. He reminded Timothy of the gift imparted to that youthful evangelist by the imposition of St. Paul's own hands, as well as by those of the presbytery; and yet he does not hesitate to designate the elders of Ephesus and Miletus who were thus ordained by St. Paul as bishops set over God's flock by the Holy Ghost Himself. St. Paul and the Apostolic Church, in fact, looked behind this visible scene. They realised vividly the truth of Christ's promise about the presence of the

Holy Ghost in the Church. They took no miserably low and Erastian views of the sacred ministry, as if it were an office of mere human order and appointment. They viewed it as a supernatural and Divine office, which no mere human power, no matter how exalted, could confer. They realised the human instruments indeed in their true position as nothing but instruments, powerless in themselves, and mighty only through God, and therefore St. Paul regarded his own ordination of the elders whom he appointed at Derbe, Iconium, Lystra, or Ephesus as a separation by the Holy Ghost to their Divine offices. The Church was, in fact, then instinct with life and spiritual vigour, because it thankfully recognised the present power, the living force and vigour of the third person of the Holy Trinity.

II. The apostles having been thus commissioned lost no time. They at once departed upon their great work. And now let us briefly indicate the scope of the first great missionary tour undertaken by St. Paul, and sketch its outline, filling in the details afterwards. According to early tradition the headquarters of the Antiochene Church were in Singon Street, in the southern quarter of Antioch.[1] After earnest and prolonged religious services they left their Christian brethren. St. Paul's own practice recorded at Ephesus, Miletus, and at Tyre shows us that prayer marked such separation from the Christian brethren, and we know that the same practice was perpetuated in the early Church; Tertullian, for instance, telling us that a brother should not leave a Christian house until he had been commended to God's

[1] An elaborate plan of ancient Antioch, accompanied with a description of its various parts and references to the authorities for the same, will be found in Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 92.

keeping. They then crossed the bridge, and proceeded along the northern bank of the Orontes to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, where the ruins still testify to the vastness of the architectural conceptions cherished by the Syrian kings. From Seleucia the apostles sailed to the island of Cyprus, whose peaks they could see eighty miles distant shining bright and clear through the pellucid air. Various circumstances would lead them thither. Barnabas was of Cyprus, and he doubtless had many friends there. Cyprus had then an immense Jewish population, as we have already pointed out; and though the apostles were specially designated for work among the Gentiles, they ever made the Jews the starting-point whence to influence the outside world, always used them as the lever whereby to move the stolid mass of paganism. The apostles showed a wholesome example to all missionaries and to all teachers by this method of action. They addressed the Jews first because they had most in common with them. And St. Paul deliberately and of set purpose worked on this principle, whether with Jews or Gentiles. He sought out the ideas or the ground common to himself and his hearers, and then, having found the points on which they agreed, he worked out from them. It is the true method of controversy. I have seen the opposite course adopted, and with very disastrous effects. I have seen a method of controversial argument pursued, consisting simply in attacks upon errors without any attempt to follow the apostolic example and discover the truths which both parties held in common, and the result has been the very natural one, that ill-will and bad feeling have been aroused without effecting any changes in conviction. We can easily understand the reason of this, if we consider how the matter would stand with

ourselves. If a man comes up to us, and without any attempt to discover our ideas or enter into sympathetic relations with us, makes a very aggressive assault upon all our particular notions and practices, our backs are at once put up, we are thrown into a defensive mood, our pride is stirred, we resent the tone, the air of the aggressor, and unconsciously determine not to be convinced by him. Controversial preaching of that class, hard, unloving, censorious, never does any permanent good, but rather strengthens and confirms the person against whose belief it is directed. Nothing of this kind will ever be found in the wise, courteous teaching of the apostle Paul, whose few recorded speeches to Jews and Gentiles may be commended to the careful study of all teachers at home or abroad as models of mission preaching, being at once prudent and loving, faithful and courageous.

From Seleucia the apostles itinerated through the whole island unto Paphos, celebrated in classical antiquity as the favourite seat of the goddess Venus, where they came for the first time into contact with a great Roman official, Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island. From Paphos they sailed across to the mainland of Asia Minor, landed at Perga, where John Mark abandoned the work to which he had put his hand. They do not seem to have stayed for long at Perga. They doubtless declared their message at the local synagogue to the Jews and proselytes who assembled there, for we are not to conclude, because a synagogue is not expressly mentioned as belonging to any special town, that therefore it did not exist. Modern discoveries have shown that Jewish synagogues were found in every considerable town or city of Asia Minor, preparing the way by their pure morality

and monotheistic teaching for the fuller and richer truths of Christianity.[1] But St. Paul had fixed his eagle gaze upon Antioch of Pisidia, a town which had been made by Augustus Cæsar the great centre of this part of Asia Minor, whence military roads radiated in every direction, lending thereby the assistance of imperial organisation to the progress of the gospel. Its situation was, in fact, the circumstance which determined the original foundation of Antioch by the Syrian princes.[2]

Facility of access, commercial convenience were points at which they chiefly aimed in selecting the sites of the cities they built, and the wisdom of their choice in the case of Antioch in Pisidia was confirmed when Augustus and Tiberius, some few years previous to St. Paul's visit, made Antioch the centre from which diverged the whole system of military roads throughout this portion of Asia Minor. It was a very large city, and its ruins and aqueducts testify to this day concerning the important position it held as the great centre of all the Roman colonies and fortresses which Augustus planted in the year B.C. 6 along the skirts of the Taurus Range to restrain the incursions of the rude mountaineers of Isauria and Pisidia. When persecution compelled the apostles to retire from Antioch they took

[1] Hypæpa, for instance, was a celebrated sanctuary of Diana, between Sardis and Ephesus. Jewish inscriptions have been found there proving that a Jewish synagogue and community existed even in that pagan stronghold: see *Revue Archéologique* for 1885, vol. ii., p. 111.

[2] There is a series of plates in Lewin's *Life of St. Paul*, vol. i., pp. 130-36, depicting the site and ruins of Antioch, and showing the roads which connected it with all the leading towns of the neighbourhood, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. Professor Ramsay, in his *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, bestows a good deal of attention on Antioch of Pisidia and its position: see pp. 47, 57, 85, 391, 453.

their way therefore to Iconium, which was some sixty miles south-east of Antioch along one of these military roads of which we have spoken, constructed for the purpose of putting down the brigands which then, as in modern times, constituted one of the great plagues of Asia Minor.[1] But why did the apostles retire to Iconium? Surely one might say, if the Jews had influence enough at Antioch to stir up the chief men of the city against the missionaries, they would have had influence enough to secure a warrant for their arrest in a neighbouring city. At first sight it seems somewhat difficult to account for the line of travel or flight adopted by the apostles. But a reference to ancient geography throws some light upon the problem. Strabo, a geographer of St. Paul's own day, tells us that Iconium was an independent principality or tetrarchy, surrounded indeed on all sides by Roman territory, but still enjoying a certain amount of independence. The apostles fled to Iconium when persecution waxed hot because they had a good road thither, and also because at Iconium they were secure from any legal molestation being under a new jurisdiction.[2]

[1] St. Paul, writing in 2nd Corinthians, speaks of himself as at times in perils of robbers. This danger may well have happened to him in the central districts of Asia Minor. There is an interesting story of St. John and the bandits in Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii., 23. The incidents there told took place in Asia Minor.

[2] Iconium was in St. Paul's day the centre of an independent tetrarchy ruled by native princes. See Pliny's *Nat. Hist.*, v. 27. The site of Iconium has never been uncertain. It was made the capital of their dominions by the Sultans of the Seldjuk Turks, and continued to occupy that position till the conquest of Constantinople. It is still called Konia, a modification of its original name, and still continues to attract a large population on account of the beauty and convenience of its situation, which gives it the title of the Damascus of Asia Minor. According to tradition Sosipatros, one of the seventy disciples, was the

After a time, however, the Jews from Antioch made their way to Iconium and began the same process which had proved so successful at Antioch. They first excited the members of the Jewish synagogue against the apostles, and through them influenced the townspeople at large, so that, though successful in winning converts, St. Paul and his companion were in danger of being stoned by a joint mob of Jews and Gentiles. They had therefore to fly a second time, and when doing so they acted on the same principle as before. They again removed themselves out of the local jurisdiction of their enemies, and passed to Derbe and Lystra, cities of Lycaonia, a Roman province which had just been formed by the Emperor Claudius.[1]

Then after a time, when the disturbances which the Jews persistently raised wherever they came had subsided, the apostles returned back over the same ground, no longer indeed publicly preaching, but organising

bishop of Iconium, and was succeeded by Terentius, another member of the same sacred company; *Acta Sanctorum*, June 20th, p. 67; Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 332. The latest account of Iconium as it is at present will be found in Sterrett's *Epigraphical Journey in Asia Minor*, printed among the Papers of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Boston, 1884. vol. ii., p. 188-225.

[1] The apostles seem to have acted as in former times persons harassed by legal processes could do in this country. A writ directed to a sheriff only ran within his own county. A man could not be arrested under it if he passed one step beyond the county bounds, till countersigned by the sheriff of the county into which the delinquent had passed. Under the Roman empire the local liberties and jurisdictions were simply infinite, a fact which of course lent much assistance to persons persecuted as the apostles were. Derbe, for instance, was a native city of Lycaonia, and belonged to the Koinon or local assembly of that province. Lystra was situated indeed in Lycaonia, but being a Roman colony had therefore exceptional privileges, and scorned to belong to the local Assembly of native cities. See Ramsay, *Hist. Geog.*, pp. 332, 375, 376.

quietly and secretly the Churches which they had founded in the different towns through which they had passed, till they arrived back at Perga, where perhaps, finding no ship sailing to Antioch, they travelled to the port of Attalia, where they succeeded in finding a passage to that city of Antioch whence they had been sent forth.[1] This brief sketch will give a general view of the first missionary tour made in the realms of paganism, and will show that it dealt with little more than two provinces of Asia Minor, Pisidia and Lycaonia, and was followed by what men would count but scanty results, the foundation and organisation of a few scattered Christian communities in some of the leading towns of these districts.

III. Let us now more particularly notice some of the details recorded concerning this journey. The apostles began their work at Cyprus, where they proclaimed the gospel in the Jewish synagogues. They were attracted as we have said to this island, first, because it was the native land of Barnabas, and then because its population was in large degree Jewish, owing to the possession of the famous copper mines of the island by Herod the Great.[2] Synagogues were scattered all over the island and proselytes appertained to each synagogue, and thus a basis of operations was ready whence the gospel message might operate. It was just the same even at Paphos, where St. Paul came in contact with the proconsul Sergius Paulus. The Jewish element here again appears, though in more active opposition than seems to have been elsewhere offered. Sergius Paulus was a Roman citizen like Cornelius of Cæsarea.

[1] It is well perhaps to note that the ι in this name is long, representing the diphthong ει, the Greek name of the town being Ἀττάλεια.

[2] See vol. i., p. 216.

He had become dissatisfied with the belief of his forefathers. He had now come into contact with the mystic East, and had yielded himself to the guidance of a man who professed the Jewish religion, which seems to have charmed by its pure morality and simple monotheism many of the noblest minds of that age. But, like all outsiders, Sergius Paulus did not make accurate and just distinctions between man and man. He yielded himself to the guidance of a man who traded on the name of a Jew, but who really practised those rites of weird sorcery which real Judaism utterly repudiated and denounced. This alone accounts for the stern language of St. Paul: "O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" St. Paul never addressed a lawful opponent in this manner. He did not believe in the efficacy of strong language in itself, nor did he abuse those who withstood him in honest argument. But he did not hesitate, on the other hand, to brand a deceiver as he deserved, or to denounce in scathing terms those who were guilty of conscious fraud. St. Paul might well be taken as a model controversialist in this respect. He knew how to distinguish between the genuine opponent who might be mistaken but was certainly conscientious, and the fraudulent hypocrite devoid of all convictions save the conviction of the value of money. With the former St. Paul was full of courtesy, patience, consideration, because he had in himself experience of the power of blind unthinking prejudice. For the latter class St. Paul had no consideration, and with them he wasted no time. His honest soul took their measure at once. He denounced them as he did Elymas on this occasion, and then passed on to deal

with nobler and purer souls, where honest and good hearts offered more promising soil for the reception of the Word of the Kingdom. Controversy of every kind is very trying to tongue and temper, but religious controversy such as that in which St. Paul spent his life is specially trying to the character. The subject is so important that it seems to excuse an over zeal and earnestness which terminates in bad temper and unwise language. And yet we sometimes cannot shrink from controversy, because conscience demands it on our part. When that happens to be the case, it will be well for us to exercise the most rigorous control over our feelings and our words; from time to time to realise by a momentary effort of introspection Christ hanging upon the cross and bearing for us the unworthy and unjust reproaches of mankind; for thus and thus only will pride be kept down and hot temper restrained and that great advantage for the truth secured which self-control always bestows upon its possessor.

There is an interesting illustration of the historic accuracy of St. Luke connected with the apostolic visit to Paphos and to Sergius Paulus the proconsul. Thrice over in the narrative of St. Luke, Sergius Paulus is called proconsul—first in the seventh verse of the thirteenth chapter, where Elymas the sorcerer is described thus, "who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding," while again the same title of proconsul is applied to Sergius in the eighth and twelfth verses. This has been the cause of much misunderstanding and of no small reproach hurled against the sacred writer. Let us inquire into its justice and the facts of the case. The Roman provinces were divided into two classes, senatorial and imperial. The senatorial provinces were ruled by proconsuls

appointed by the Senate; the imperial by proprætors appointed by the emperors. This arrangement was made by Augustus Cæsar, and is reported to us by Strabo who lived and wrote during St. Paul's early manhood. But now a difficulty arises. Strabo gives us the list of the provinces senatorial and imperial alike, and expressly classes Cyprus amongst the imperial provinces, which were ruled by proprætors and not by proconsuls. In the opinion of the older critics, St. Luke was thus plainly convicted of a mistake and of a flagrant contradiction of that great authority the geographer Strabo. But it is never safe to jump to conclusions of that kind with respect to a contemporaneous writer who has proved himself accurate on other occasions. It is far better and far safer to say, Let us wait awhile, and see what further investigations will reveal. And so it has proved in this special case. Strabo tells us of the original arrangement made about thirty years B.C. between the Emperor Augustus and the Senate, when Cyprus was most certainly numbered amongst the imperial provinces; but he omits to tell us what another historian of the same century, Dion Cassius, does relate, that the same Emperor modified this arrangement five years later, handing Cyprus and Gallia Narbonensis over to the rule of the Senate, so that from that date and henceforth throughout the first century of our era Cyprus was governed by proconsuls alone, as St. Luke most accurately, though only incidentally, reports.[1] Here, too,

[1] The words of Dion are: "Eo tempore Cyprum ac Galliam Narbonensem, quia nihil armis suis indigerent, populo reddidit; atque ita proconsules etiam in istas provincias mitti cœperunt." See the works of Dion, edited by H. Valerius, vol. i., p. 733 (Hamburg, 1750). Valerius, in his note on this passage, notes the inaccuracies into which the older critics—Grotius, Hammond, Baronius—had fallen about Acts xiii. 7.

The results of modern investigation among inscriptions and coins have come in to supplement and support the testimony of historians. The Greek inscriptions discovered prior to and during the earlier half of this century have been collected together in Boeckh's *Corpus of Greek Inscriptions*, which is, indeed, a vast repertory of original documents concerning the life, Pagan and Christian, of the Greek world. In the inscriptions numbered 2631 and 2632 in that valuable work we have the names of Q. Julius Cordus and L. Annius Bassus expressly mentioned as proconsuls of Cyprus in A.D. 51, 52; while on coins of Cyprus have been found the names of Cominius Proclus and Quadratus, who held the same office. But the very latest investigations have borne striking testimony to the same fact. The name of the very proconsul whom St. Paul addressed appears on an inscription discovered in our own time. Cyprus has been thoroughly investigated since it passed into British hands, specially by General Cesnola, who has written a work on the subject which is well worth reading by those who take an interest in Scripture lands and the scenes where the apostles laboured. In that work, p. 425, Cesnola tells us of a mutilated inscription which he recovered dealing with some subject of no special importance, but bearing the following precious notice giving its date as "Under Paulus the Proconsul"; proving to us by contemporary evidence that Sergius Paulus ruled the island, and ruled it with the special title of proconsul. Surely an instance like this—and we shall have several such to notice—is quite enough to make fair minds suspend their judgment when charges of inaccuracy are alleged against St. Luke dependent upon our own ignorance alone of the entire facts of the case. A wider knowledge, a larger investigation we

may well be sure will suffice to clear the difficulty and vindicate the fair fame of the sacred historian.

From Cyprus the apostles passed over to the continent, and opened their missionary work at Antioch of Pisidia, where the first recorded address of St. Paul was delivered. This sermon, delivered in the Pisidian synagogue, is deserving of our special notice because it is the only missionary address delivered by St. Paul to the Jews of the Dispersion which has been handed down to us, unless we include the few words delivered to the Roman Jews reported in the twenty-eighth chapter from the seventeenth to the twenty-eighth verses. Let us briefly analyse it, premising that it should be carefully compared with the addresses of St. Peter to the Jews upon the Day of Pentecost and with the speech delivered by St. Stephen before the Sanhedrin, when all three will be found to run upon the same lines. The apostles having reached Antioch waited until the Sabbath came round, and then sought the local meeting-place of the Jews. The apostles felt indeed that they were entrusted with a great mission important for the human race, but yet they knew right well that feverish impetuosity or restless activity was not the true way to advance the cause they had in hand. They did not believe in wild irregular actions which only stir up opposition. They were calm and dignified in their methods, because they were consciously guided by the Divine Spirit of Him concerning whom it was said in the days of His flesh, "He did not strive nor cry, neither did any man hear His voice in the streets." On the Sabbath day they entered the synagogue, and took their place on a bench set apart for the reception of those who were regarded as teachers. At the conclu-

sion of the public worship and the reading of the lessons out of the law and the prophets, such as still are read in the synagogue worship, the Rulers of the Synagogue sent to them the minister or apostle of the synagogue intimating their permission to address the assembled congregation, whereupon St. Paul arose and delivered an address, of which the following is an analysis. St. Paul opened his sermon by a reference to the lessons which had just been read in the service, which—as all the writers of the Apostle's life, Lewin, Conybeare and Howson, and Archdeacon Farrar, agree —were taken from the first chapter of Deuteronomy and the first of Isaiah. He points out, as St. Stephen had done, the providential dealings of God with their forefathers from the time of the original choice of Abraham down to David. The Jews had been divinely guided throughout their history down to David's days, and that Divine guidance had not then ceased, but continued down to the present, as the Apostle then proceeds to show. In David's seed there had been left a hope for Israel which every true Jew still cherished. He then announces that the long-cherished hope had now at last been fulfilled. This fact depended not on his testimony alone. The Messiah whom they had long expected had been preceded by a prophet whose reputation had spread into these distant regions, and had gained disciples, as we shall afterwards find, at Ephesus. John the Baptist had announced the Messiah's appearance, and proclaimed his own inferiority to Him. But then an objection occurs to the Apostle which might naturally be raised. If John's reputation and doctrine had penetrated to Antioch, the story of the crucifixion of Jesus may also have been reported there, and the local Jews may therefore have concluded that

such an ignominious death was conclusive against the claims of Jesus? The Apostle then proceeds to show how that the providential rule of God had been exercised even in that matter. The wrath of man had been compelled to praise God, and even while the rulers at Jerusalem were striving to crush Jesus Christ they were in reality fulfilling the voices of the prophets which went beforehand and proclaimed the sufferings of the Messiah exactly as they had happened. And further still, God had set His seal to the truth of the story by raising Jesus Christ from the dead according to the predictions of the Old Testament, which he expounds after the manner of the Jewish schools, finding a hint of the Resurrection of Christ in Isaiah lv. 3: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David"; and a still clearer one in Psalm xvi. 10: "Thou wilt not give Thine Holy One to see corruption." The Apostle, after quoting this text, which from its use by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost seems to have been a passage commonly quoted in the Jewish controversy, terminates his discourse with a proclamation of the exalted blessings which the Messiah has brought, indicating briefly but clearly the universal character of the gospel promises, and finishing with a warning against stupid obstinate resistance drawn from Habakkuk i. 5, which primarily referred to the disbelief in impending Chaldæan invasion exhibited by the Jews, but which the Apostle applies to the Jews of Antioch and their spiritual dangers arising from similar wilful obstinacy.

We have of course not much more than the heads of the apostolic sermon. Five or seven minutes of a not very rapid speaker would amply suffice to exhaust the exact words attributed to St. Paul. He must have enlarged on the various topics. He could not have

introduced John the Baptist in the abrupt manner in which he is noticed in the text of our New Testament. It seems quite natural enough to us that he should be thus named, because John occupies a very high and exalted position in our mental horizon from our earliest childhood. But who was John the Baptist for these Jewish settlers in the Pisidian Antioch? He was simply a prophet of whom they may have heard a vague report, who appeared before Israel for a year or two, and then suffered death at the hands of Herod the Tetrarch: and so it must have been with many other topics introduced into this discourse. They must have been much more copiously treated, elaborated, discussed, or else the audience in the Pisidian synagogue must have loved concentrated discourse more keenly than any other assembly that ever met together. And yet, though the real discourse must have been much longer—and did we only possess the sermon in its fulness many a difficulty which now puzzles us would disappear at once—we can still see the line of the apostolic argument and grasp its force. The Apostle argues, in fact, that God had chosen the original fathers of the Jewish race. He had gone on conferring ever fresh and larger blessings in the wilderness, in Canaan, under the Judges, and then under the Kings, till the time of David, from whose seed God had raised up the greatest gift of all in the person of Jesus Christ, through whom blessings unknown before and unsurpassed were offered to mankind. St. Paul contends exactly as St. Stephen had done, that true religion has been a perpetual advance and development; that Christianity is not something distinct from Judaism, but is essentially one with it, being the flower of a plant which God Himself had planted, the crown

and glory of the work which He had Himself begun. This address, as we have already noticed in the preface to the first volume of this work, will repay careful study; for it shows the methods adopted by the early Christian when dealing with the Jews.[1] They did not attack any of their peculiar views or practices, but confining themselves to what they held in common strove to convince them that Christianity was the logical outcome of their own principles.

The results of this address were very indicative of the future. The Jews of the synagogue seem to have been for a time impressed by St. Paul's words. Several of them, together with a number of the proselytes, attached themselves to him as his disciples, and were further instructed in the faith. The proselytes especially must have been attracted by the Apostle's words. They were, like Cornelius, Proselytes of the Gate, who observed merely the seven precepts of Noah and renounced idolatry, but were not circumcised or subject to the restrictions and duties of the Jewish ritual. They must have welcomed tidings of a religion embodying all that which they venerated in the Jewish Law and yet devoid of its narrowness and disadvantages.

Next Sabbath the whole city was stirred with excitement, and then Jewish jealousy burst into a flame. They saw that their national distinctions and glory were in danger. They refused to listen or permit any further proclamation of what must have seemed to them a revolutionary teaching disloyal to the traditions and existence of their religion and their nation. They used their influence therefore with the chief men of the city, exercising it through their wives, who were

[1] Cf. vol. i., pp. xi, 300.

in many cases attracted by the Jewish worship, or who may have been themselves of Jewish birth, and the result was that the apostles were driven forth to preach in other cities of the same central region of Asia Minor. This was the first attack made by the Jews upon St. Paul in his mission journeys. He had already had experience of their hostility at Damascus and at Jerusalem, but this hostility was doubtless provoked by reason of their resentment at the apostasy to the Nazarene sect of their chosen champion. But here at Antioch we perceive the first symptom of that bitter hostility to St. Paul because of his catholic principles, his proclamation of salvation as open to all alike, Jew or Gentile, free from any burdensome or restrictive conditions, a hostility which we shall find persistently pursuing him, both within the Church, and still more without the Church, at Iconium, at Lystra, at Thessalonica, at Corinth, and at Jerusalem. It would seem indeed as if the invention of the term "Christian" at Antioch marked a crisis in the history of the early Church. Henceforth St. Paul and his friends became the objects of keenest hatred, because the Jews had recognised that they taught a form of belief absolutely inconsistent with the Jewish faith as hitherto known; a hatred which seems, however, to have been limited to St. Paul and his Antiochene friends, for the temporising measures and the personal prejudices, the whole atmosphere, in fact, of the Jerusalem Church led the unbelieving Jews to make a broad distinction between the disciples at Jerusalem and the followers of St. Paul

IV. So far we have dealt with St. Paul's address at Antioch as typical of his methods in dealing with the Jews, and their treatment of the Apostle as typical of that hostility which the Jews ever displayed to the earliest

teachers of Christian truth, as witnessed not only by the New Testament, but also by the writings and histories of Justin Martyr, and of Polycarp of Smyrna, and of all the early apologists. But we are not left in this typical Church history without a specimen of St. Paul's earlier methods when dealing with the heathen. St. Paul, after his rejection at Antioch, escaped to Iconium, sixty miles distant, and thence, when Jewish persecution again waxed hot, betook himself to Lystra, some forty miles to the south. There the Apostle found himself in a new atmosphere and amid new surroundings. Antioch and Iconium had large Jewish populations, and were permeated with Jewish ideas. Lystra was a thoroughly Gentile town with only a very few Jewish inhabitants. The whole air of the place—its manners, customs, popular legends—was thoroughly pagan. This offered St. Paul a new field for his activity, of which he availed himself right diligently, finishing up his work with healing a lifelong cripple, a miracle which so impressed the mob of Lystra that they immediately cried out in the native speech of Lycaonia, "The gods are coming down to us in the likeness of men," calling Barnabas Jupiter, on account of his lofty stature and more commanding appearance, and Paul Mercurius or Hermes, because of his more insignificant size and more copious eloquence. Here again we have, in our writer's words, an incidental and even unconscious witness to the truth of our narrative. The cry of the men of Lystra, these rude barbarian people of the original inhabitants of the land, who, though they could understand Greek, naturally fell back on their native Lycaonian language to express their deeper feelings,—this cry, I say, refers to an ancient legend connected with their history, of which we find a lengthened

account in the works of the poet Ovid. Jupiter attended by Mercury once descended to visit the earth and see how man was faring. Some scoffed at the deities, and were punished. Others received them, and were blessed accordingly.[1] The wondrous work performed on the cripple naturally led the men of Lystra to think that the Divine Epiphany had been repeated. The colony of Lystra—for Lystra was a Roman colony[2]—was devoted to the worship of Jupiter, in memory doubtless of this celebrated visit. A temple to Jupiter stood before and outside the gate of the city, as the temple of Diana stood outside the gate of Ephesus, lending sanctity and protection to the neighbouring town. The priest and the people act upon the spur of the moment. They bring victims and garlands prepared to offer sacrifice to the deities who, as they thought, had revisited their ancient haunts. They were approaching the house where the apostles were dwelling—perhaps that of Lois and Eunice and Timothy—when Paul sprang forward and delivered a short impassioned address deprecating the threatened adoration. Let us quote the address in order that we may see its full force: "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the

[1] See the story of Philemon and Baucis as told in Smith's *Dictionary of Classical Biography and Mythology.*

[2] The site of Lystra and the fact that it was a Roman colony were unknown till 1884, when Sterrett discovered an inscription which ascertained both facts: see Ramsay's *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 332, and Sterrett's *Epigraph. Journey*, already quoted, from "Papers of American School at Athens," vol. iii., p. 142 (Boston, 1888). Artemas, one of the seventy disciples, is said to have been bishop of Lystra: see *Acta Sanct.*, June 20th, p. 67.

earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." How very different St. Paul's words to the pagans are from those he addressed to the Jews and proselytes, believers in the true God and in the facts of revelation! He proves himself a born orator, able to adapt himself to different classes of hearers, and, grasping their special ideas and feelings, to suit his arguments to their various conditions. St. Paul's short address on this occasion may be compared with his speech to the men of Athens, and the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the various apologies composed by the earliest advocates of Christianity during the second century. Take, for instance, the Apology of Aristides, of which we gave an account in the preface to the first volume of this commentary on the Acts. We shall find, when we examine it and compare it with the various passages of Scripture to which we have just referred, that all run upon exactly the same lines. They all appeal to the evidence of nature and of natural religion. They say not one word about Scripture concerning which their hearers know nothing. They are not like unwise Christian advocates among ourselves who think they can overthrow an infidel with a text out of Scripture, begging the question at issue, the very point to be decided being this, whether there is such a thing at all as Scripture. St. Paul does with the men of Lystra and the men of Athens what Aristides did when writing for the Emperor Hadrian, and what every wise missionary will still do with the heathen or the unbeliever

whose salvation he is seeking. The Apostle takes up the ground that is common to himself and his hearers. He shows them the unworthiness of the conception they have formed of the Godhead. He appeals to the testimony of God's works and to the interior witness of conscience prophesying perpetually in the secret tabernacle of man's heart, and thus appealing in God's behalf to the eternal verities and evidences of nature exterior and interior to man, he vindicates the Divine authority, glorifies the Divine character, and restrains the capricious and ignorant folly of the men of Lystra.

Lastly, we find in this narrative two typical suggestions for the missionary activity of the Church in every age. The men of Lystra with marvellous facility soon changed their opinion concerning St. Paul. M. Rénan has well pointed out that to the pagans of those times a miracle was no necessary proof of a Divine mission. It was just as easily a proof to them of a diabolical or magical power. The Jews, therefore, who followed St. Paul, had no difficulty in persuading the men of Lystra that this assailant of their hereditary deities was a mere charlatan, a clever trickster moved by wicked powers to lead them astray. Their character and reputation as Jews, worshippers of one God alone, would lend weight to this charge, and enable them the more easily to effect their purpose of killing St. Paul, in which they had failed at Antioch and Iconium. The fickle mob easily lent themselves to the purposes of the Jews, and having stoned St. Paul dragged his body outside the city walls, thinking him dead. A few faithful disciples followed the crowd, however. Perhaps, too, the eirenarch or local police authority with his subordinates had interfered, and the rioters, apprehensive of punishment for their disturbance of the peace,

had retired.[1] As the disciples stood around weeping for the loss they had sustained, the Apostle awoke from the swoon into which he had fallen, and was carried into the city by the faithful few, among whom doubtless were Timothy and his parents. Lystra, however, was no longer safe for St. Paul. He retired, therefore, some twenty miles to Derbe, where he continued for some time labouring with success, till the storm and the excitement had subsided at Lystra. Then he returned back over the same ground which he had already traversed. He might have pushed on along the great Eastern Road, nigh as Derbe was to the passes through the Taurus Range which led directly to Cilicia and Tarsus. He wished to go back indeed to Antioch. He had been a year or so absent on this first excursion into the vast fields of Gentile paganism. Wider and more extensive missions had now to be planned. The wisdom gained by personal experience had now to be utilised in consultation with the brethren. But still a work had to be done in Lycaonia and Pisidia if the results of his labours were not to be lost. He had quitted in great haste each town he had visited, forced out by persecution, and leaving the organisation of the Church incomplete. St. Paul came, like his Master, not merely to proclaim a doctrine: he came still more to found and organise a Divine society. He returns therefore back again along the route he had first taken. He does not preach in public, nor run any risks of raising riots anew. His work is now entirely of a

[1] The Romans had a local police in Asia Minor, organised after the manner of our own local police. The chief of the police in each town was called the eirenarch, and was annually appointed by the proconsul. The Romans never made the mistake of placing the police in the hands of discontented subjects. See, on this curious topic, Le Bas and Waddington's *Voyage Archéologique*, t. iii., pp. 27 and 255.

character interior to the Church. He strengthens the disciples by his teaching, he points out that earthly trials and persecutions are marks of God's love and favour rather than tokens of His wrath, he notes for them that it is needful "through many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of God," and above all he secures the permanence of his work by ordaining presbyters after the fashion of the Church at Antioch, with prayer and fasting and imposition of hands. This is one great typical lesson taught us here by St. Paul's return journey through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia. Preaching and evangelistic work are important; but pastoral work and Church consolidation and Church order are equally important, if any permanent fruits are to be garnered and preserved. And the other typical lesson is implied in the few words wherein the termination of his first great missionary journey is narrated. "When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled."

Antioch was the centre whence Paul and Barnabas had issued forth to preach among the Gentiles, and to Antioch the apostles returned to cheer the Church with the narrative of their labours and successes, and to restore themselves and their exhausted powers with the sweetness of Christian fellowship, of brotherly love and kindness such as then flourished, as never before or since, amongst the children of men. Mission work such as St. Paul did on this great tour is very exhausting, and it can always be best performed from a great centre. Mission work, evangelistic work of any kind, if it is to be successful, makes terrible demands on man's whole nature, physical, mental, spiritual, and

bodily. The best restorative for that nature when so exhausted is conversation and intercourse with men of like minds, such as St. Paul found when, returning to Antioch, he cheered the hearts and encouraged the hopes of the Church by narrating the wonders he had seen done and the triumphs he had seen won through the power of the Holy Ghost.[1]

[1] It has often been argued that the gift of tongues conferred by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost was not necessary, as Greek was universally spoken in Asia Minor. The use of the Lycaonian tongue at Lystra, even though a Roman colony, is an important fact on the other side. Mr. Ramsay, in his *Hist. Geog. of Asia Minor*, says; "Greek was not the popular language of the plateau, even in the third century after Christ; the mass of the people spoke Lycaonian and Galatian and Phrygian, though those who wrote books wrote Greek and those who governed spoke Latin." Cf. pp. 98, 99 of Mr. Ramsay's work, and p. 103 of the previous volume of this commentary. This subject of the original languages of Asia Minor and their survival to Christian times is an interesting and novel subject of study, for which materials are gradually accumulating. Thus the ancient Cappadocian language is discussed and a lexicon of it compiled in a monograph which appeared in the *Museum* of the Evangelical school at Smyrna (1880-84), pp. 47—265. A large number of inscriptions in the Phrygian language have also been recovered. St. Paul, addressing the natives of the central plateau of Asia Minor in Greek, would have been like an Englishman preaching to the inhabitants of Wales or of Connemara in English. I never heard of any powerful results thus following, save in the case of Giraldus Cambrensis who tells us inhis *Itinerary in Wales* of the melting character of his own Latin sermons upon the Welsh people, though they did not understand a word of them. But then Giraldus was, to say the least, an imaginative historian.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL.

"And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. . . . And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter." . . . James said, "My judgment is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God."—ACTS xv. 1, 2, 6, 19.

I HAVE headed this chapter, which treats of Acts xv. and its incidents, the First Christian Council, and that of set purpose and following eminent ecclesiastical example. People often hear the canons of the great Councils quoted, the canons of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, those great assemblies which threshed out the controversies concerning the person and nature of Jesus Christ and determined with marvellous precision the methods of expressing the true doctrine on these points, and they wonder where or how such ancient documents have been preserved. Well, the answer is simple enough. If any reader, curious about the doings of these ancient assemblies, desires to study the decrees which proceeded from them, and even the debates which occurred in them, he need only ask in any great library for a history of the Councils, edited either by Hardouin or Labbe and

Cossart, or, best and latest of all, by Mansi. They are not externally very attractive volumes, being vast folios; nor are they light or interesting reading. The industrious student will learn much from them, however; and he will find that they all begin the history of the Christian Councils by placing at the very head and forefront thereof the history and acts of the Council of Jerusalem held about the year 48 or 49 A.D., wherein we find a typical example of a Church synod which set a fashion perpetuated throughout the ages in councils, conferences, and congresses down to the present time. Let us inquire then into the origin, the procedure, and the results of this Assembly, sure that a council conducted under such auspices, reported by such a divinely guided historian, and dealing with such burning questions, must have important lessons for the Church of every age.[1]

I. The question, however, naturally meets us at the very threshold of our inquiry as to the date of this assembly, and the position which it holds in the process of development through which the Christian Church was passing. The decision of this Synod at Jerusalem did not finally settle the questions about the law and its obligatory character. The relations between the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Church continued in some places, especially in the East, more or less unsettled well into the second century; for the Jews found it very hard indeed to surrender all their cherished

[1] Mansi, A.D. 1692—1769, was Archbishop of Lucca. He was a very learned man. Besides valuable editions of other men's works he published his *Sarcorum Conciliorum Collectio* in thirty-one vols. folio, Florence and Venice, 1759-98. Mansi fixes the date of the Jerusalem Synod either to 49 or 51 A.D. He counts it the third synod, regarding as the first synod that held for the election of Matthias, and as the second that assembled for the choice of the deacons.

privileges and ancient national distinctions. But the decree of the Jerusalem Assembly, though only a partial settlement, "mere articles of peace," as it has been well called, to tide over a pressing local controversy, formed in St. Paul's hands a powerful weapon whereby the freedom, the unity, and the catholicity of the Church was finally achieved. Where, then, do we locate this Synod in the story of St. Paul's labours?

The narrative of the Acts clearly enough places it between the first and the second missionary tours in Asia Minor undertaken by that apostle. Paul and Barnabas laboured for the first time in Asia Minor probably from the autumn of 44 till the spring or summer of 46. Their work at that time must have extended over at least eighteen months or more. Their journeys on foot must alone have taken up no small time. They traversed from Perga, where they landed, to Derbe, whence they turned back upon their work, a space of at least two hundred and fifty miles. They made lengthened sojourns in large cities like Antioch and Iconium. They doubtless visited other places of which we are told nothing. Then, having completed their aggressive work, they retraced their steps along the same route, and began their work of consolidation and Church organisation, which must have occupied on their return journey almost as much, if not more, time that they had spent in aggressive labour upon their earlier journey. When we consider all this, and strive to realise the conditions of life and travel in Asia Minor at that time, eighteen months will not appear too long for the work which the apostles actually performed. After their return to Antioch they took up their abode in that city for a considerable period. "They tarried no little time with the disciples" are the exact words

of St. Luke telling of their stay at Antioch. Then comes the tale of Jewish intrigues and insinuations, followed by debates, strife, and oppositions concerning the universally binding character of the Jewish law, terminating with the formal deputation from Antioch to Jerusalem. These latter events at Antioch may have happened in a few weeks or months, or they may have extended over a couple of years. But then, on the other hand, we note that St. Paul's second missionary journey began soon after the Synod of Jerusalem. That journey was very lengthened. It led St. Paul right through Asia Minor, and thence into Europe, where he must have made a stay of at least two years. He was at Corinth for eighteen months when Gallio arrived as proconsul about the middle of the year 53, and previously to that he had worked his way through Macedonia and Greece. St. Paul on his second tour must have been then at least four years absent from Antioch, which he must therefore have left about the year 49 or 50. The Synod of Jerusalem must therefore be assigned to the year 48 A.D. or thereabouts; or, in other words, not quite twenty years after the Crucifixion.

II. And now this leads us to consider the occasion of the Synod. The time was not, as we have said, quite twenty years after the Crucifixion, yet that brief space had been quite sufficient to raise questions undreamt of in earlier days. The Church was at first completely homogeneous, its members being all Jews; but the admission of the Gentiles and the action of St. Peter in the matter of Cornelius had destroyed this characteristic so dear to the Jewish heart. The Divine revelation at Joppa to St. Peter and the gift of the Holy Ghost to Cornelius had for a time quenched the opposition to the admission of the Gentiles to baptism; but, as

we have already said, the extreme Jewish party were only silenced for a time, they were not destroyed. They took up a new position. The case of Cornelius merely decided that a man might be baptized without having been *previously* circumcised; but it decided nothing in their opinion about the *subsequent* necessity for circumcision and admission into the ranks of the Jewish nation. Their view, in fact, was the same as of old. Salvation belonged exclusively to the Jewish nation, and therefore if the converted Gentiles were to be saved it must be by incorporation into that body to which salvation alone belonged. The strict Jewish section of the Church insisted the more upon this point, because they saw rising up in the Church of Antioch, and elsewhere among the Churches of Syria and Cilicia, a grave social danger threatening the existence of their nation as a separate people. There were just then two classes of disciples in these Churches. There were disciples who lived after the Jewish fashion,—abstaining from unlawful foods, using food slain by Jewish butchers, and scrupulous in washings and lustrations; and there were Gentiles who lived after the Gentile fashion, and in especial ate pork and things strangled. The strict Jews knew right well the tendency of a majority to swallow up a minority, specially when they were all members of the same religious community, enjoying the same privileges and partakers of the same hope. A majority does not indeed necessarily absorb a minority. Roman Catholicism is the religion of the majority in Ireland and France; yet it has not absorbed the small Protestant minority. The adherents of Judaism were scattered in St. Paul's day all over the world, yet Paganism had not swallowed them up. In these cases,

however, the minority have been completely separated from the majority by a middle wall, a barrier of rigid discipline, and of strong, yea, even violent religious repugnance. But the prospect now before the strict Jewish party was quite different. In the Syrian Church as they beheld it growing up Jew and Gentile would be closely linked together, professing the same faith, saying the same prayers, joining in the same sacraments, worshipping in the same buildings. All the advantages, too, would be on the side of the Gentile. He was freed from the troublesome restrictions—the more troublesome because so petty and minute—of the Levitical Law. He could eat what he liked, and join in social converse and general life without hesitation or fear. In a short time a Jewish disciple would come to ask himself, What do I gain by all these observances, this yoke of ordinances, which neither we nor our fathers have been able perfectly to bear? If a Gentile disciple can be saved without them, why should I trouble myself with them? The Jewish party saw clearly enough that toleration of the presence of the Gentiles in the Church and their admission to full communion and complete Christian privileges simply involved the certain overthrow of Jewish customs, Jewish privileges, and Jewish national expectations. They saw that it was a case of war to the death, one party or the other must conquer, and therefore in self-defence they raised the cry, "Unless the Gentile converts be circumcised after the manner of Moses they cannot be saved."

Antioch was recognised at Jerusalem as the centre of Gentile Christianity. Certain, therefore, of the zealous, Judaising disciples of Jerusalem repaired to Antioch, joined the Church, and secretly proceeded to

organise opposition to the dominant practice, using for that purpose all the authority connected with the name of James the Lord's brother, who presided over the Mother Church of the Holy City.

Now let us see what position St. Paul took up with respect to these "false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out the liberty he enjoyed in Christ Jesus." Paul and Barnabas both set themselves undauntedly to fight against such teaching. They had seen and known the spiritual life which flourished free from all Jewish observances in the Church of the Gentiles. They had seen the gospel bringing forth the fruits of purity and faith, of joy and peace in the Holy Ghost; they knew that these things prepare the soul for the beatific vision of God, and confer a present salvation here below; and they could not tolerate the idea that a Jewish ceremony was necessary over and above the life which Christ confers if men are to gain final salvation.

Here, perhaps, is the proper place to set forth St. Paul's view of circumcision and of all external Jewish ordinances, as we gather it from a broad review of his writings. St. Paul vigorously opposed all those who taught the *necessity* of Jewish rites so far as salvation is concerned. This is evident from this chapter and from the Epistle to the Galatians. But, on the other hand, St. Paul had not the slightest objection to men observing the law and submitting to circumcision, if they only realised that these things were mere national customs and observed them as national customs, and even as religious rites, but not as *necessary* religious rites. If men took a right view of circumcision, St. Paul had not the slightest objection to it. It was not to circumcision St. Paul objected, but to

the extreme stress laid upon it, the intolerant views connected with it. Circumcision as a voluntary practice, an interesting historical relic of ancient ideas and customs, he never rejected,—nay, further, he even practised it, as we shall see in the case of Timothy; circumcision as a compulsory practice binding upon all men St. Paul utterly abhorred. We may, perhaps, draw an illustration from a modern Church in this respect. The Coptic and Abyssinian Churches retain the ancient Jewish practice of circumcision. These Churches date back to the earliest Christian times, and retain doubtless in this respect the practice of the primitive Christian Church. The Copts circumcise their children on the eighth day and before they are baptized; but they regard this rite as a mere national custom, and treat it as absolutely devoid of any religious meaning, significance, or necessity. St. Paul would have had no objection to circumcision in this aspect any more than he would have objected to a Turk for wearing a fez, or a Chinaman for wearing a pigtail, or a Hindoo for wearing a turban. National customs as such were things absolutely indifferent in his view. But if Turkish or Chinese Christians were to insist upon all men wearing their peculiar dress and observing their peculiar national customs as being things absolutely necessary to salvation, St. Paul, were he alive, would denounce and oppose them as vigorously as he did the Judaisers of his own day.[1]

[1] We miss the true standpoint whence to judge St. Paul's conduct aright, when we think as people generally do that St. Paul opposed circumcision *per se*. He simply opposed it when connected with wrong ideas. The Judaising disciples viewed the Jewish nation as the covenant people to whom alone salvation belonged. St. Paul viewed the Church as the body to whom alone salvation belonged, admission to which was gained by baptism. If any Christian holding St. Paul's

This is the explanation of St. Paul's own conduct. Some have regarded him as at times inconsistent with his own principles with regard to the law of Moses. And yet if men will but look closer and think more deeply, they will see that St. Paul never violated the rules which he had imposed upon himself. He refused to circumcise Titus, for instance, because the Judaising party at Jerusalem were insisting upon the absolute necessity of circumcising the Gentiles if they were to be saved. Had St. Paul consented to the circumcision of Titus, he would have been yielding assent, or seeming to yield assent, to their contention (see Gal. ii. 3). He circumcised Timothy at Lystra because of the Jews in that neighbourhood; not indeed because they thought it necessary to salvation that an uncircumcised man should be so treated, but because they knew that his mother was a Jewess, and the principle of the Jewish law, and of the Roman law too, was that a man's nationality and status followed that of his mother, not that of his father, so that the son of a Jewess must be incorporated with Israel. Timothy

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view chose to add any private ceremony such as circumcision in order to gain admission into any human society, St. Paul would not have opposed him any more than, if he were now alive, he would have opposed or denounced a Christian man because he became a Freemason, or an Orangeman, or joined the Oddfellows, observing the special ceremonies appointed for admission. The nearest approach in later times to the position taken up by the strict Jewish party will be found in the history of mediæval monasticism. The Cistercians and subsequently the Mendicant Orders endeavoured to persuade every person that every one who wished to be saved must join their Orders and assume their peculiar dress. On this account Fitz Ralph, Archbishop of Armagh, and his friend Wickliffe denounced them most vigorously. I have given some amusing instances of the opposition to the Cistercians evoked two centuries earlier by similar claims in *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*, p. 42.

was circumcised in obedience to national law and custom not upon any compromise of religious principle. St. Paul himself made a vow and cut off his hair and offered sacrifices in the Temple as being the national customs of a Jew. These were things in themselves utterly meaningless and indifferent; but they pleased other people. They cost him a little time and trouble; but they helped on the great work he had in hand, and tended to make his opponents more willing to listen to him. St. Paul, therefore, with his great large mind, willing to please others for their good to edification, gratified them by doing what they thought became a Jew with a true national spirit beating within his breast. Mere externals mattered nothing in St. Paul's estimation. He would wear any vestments, or take any position, or use any ceremony, esteeming them all things indifferent, provided only they conciliated human prejudices and cleared difficulties out of the way of the truth. But if men insisted upon them as things necessary, then he opposed with all his might. This is the golden thread which will rule our footsteps wandering amid the mazes of this earliest Christian controversy. It will amply vindicate St. Paul's consistency, and show that he never violated the principles he had laid down for his own guidance. Had the spirit of St. Paul animated the Church of succeeding ages, how many a controversy and division would have been thereby escaped![1]

[1] I have often noted what I consider an unfair use of this controversy and of St. Paul's position in it. Men in the heat of argument have represented the High Church, or rather the so-called Ritualists in the Church of England, as answering to the Judaisers of St. Paul's day. There seems to me, however, no parallel between them. The Judaisers contended for a certain ceremony as *necessary to salvation*. I never heard of any Ritualist who considered any of his dearest practices in

III. Now let us turn our attention to the actual history of the controversy and strife which raged at Antioch and Jerusalem, and endeavour to read the lessons the sacred narrative teaches. What a striking picture of early Church life is here presented! How full of teaching, of comfort, and of warning! How corrective of the false notions we are apt to cherish of the state of the primitive Church! There we behold the Church of Antioch rejoicing one day in the tidings of a gospel free to the world, and on the next day torn with dissension as to the points and qualifications necessary to salvation. For we must observe that the discussion started at Antioch touched no secondary question, and dealt with no mere point of ritual. It was a fundamental question which troubled the Church. And yet that Church had apostles and teachers abiding in it who could work miracles and speak with tongues, and who received from time to time direct revelations from heaven, and were endowed with the extraordinary presence of the Holy Ghost. Yet there it was that controversy with all its troubles raised its head, and "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension" with their opponents. What a necessary warning for every age, and specially for our own, we behold in this narrative! Has not this sacred Book a message in

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this light. He may view them as lawful, as edifying, and very necessary for the instruction of the people; but I have never heard of their most extreme adherents contending for their necessity to salvation. It would be just as true to identify their opponents with the Judaisers, because they have insisted, and often with great vigour, upon the use of the black gown in the pulpit. I have known extreme men to take up the position that the gospel could not be preached where the black gown was not used. Any one who will take the trouble to read the *Life of Bishop Blomfield* of London, edited by his son, vol. ii., will see some striking illustrations of the extent to which such views were pushed half a century ago.

this passage specially applicable to our own time? A great Romeward movement has within the last seventy years, more powerful in the earlier portion of that period than in the latter, extented itself over Europe. English people think that they have themselves been the only persons who have experienced it. But this is a great mistake. Germany forty and fifty years ago felt it also to a large extent. And what was the great predisposing cause of that tendency? Men had simply become tired of the perpetual controversies which raged within the churches and communions outside the sway of Rome. They longed for the perpetual peace and rest which seemed to them to exist within the Papal domains, and they therefore flung themselves headlong into the arms of a Church which promised them relief from the exercise of that private judgment and personal responsibility which had become for them a crushing burden too heavy to be borne. And yet they forgot several things, the sudden discovery of which has sent many of these intellectual and spiritual cowards in various directions, some back to their original homes, some far away into the regions of scepticism and spiritual darkness. They forgot, for instance, to inquire how far the charmer who was alluring them from the land of their nativity by specious promises could satisfy the hopes she was raising. They hoped to get rid of dissension and controversy; but did they? When they had left their childhood's home and their father's house and sought the house of the stranger, did they find there halcyon peace? Nay, rather did they not find there as bitter strife, nay, far more bitter strife, on questions like the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility than ever raged at home? Did they not find, and do they not find still, that no man and no

society can put a hook in the jaws of that Leviathan, the right of private judgment, which none can tame or restrain, and which asserts itself still in the Roman Communion as vigorously as ever even now when the decree of Papal infallibility has elevated that dogma into the rank of those necessary to salvation? Else whence come those dissensions and discussions between minimisers and maximisers of that decree? How is it that no two doctors or theologians will give precisely the same explanation of it, and that, as we in Ireland have seen, every curate fresh from Maynooth claims to be able to express his own private judgment and determination whether any special Papal decree or bull is binding or not?[1] This is one important point forgotten by those who have sought the Roman Communion because of its promises of freedom from controversy. They forgot to ask, Can these promises be fulfilled? And many of them, in the perpetual unrest and strife in which they have found themselves involved as much in their new home as in their old, have proved the specious hopes held out to be the veriest mirage of the Sahara desert. But this was not the only omission of which such persons were guilty. They forgot that, suppose the Roman Church could fulfil its promises and prove a religious home of perfect peace

[1] The conduct of the Romish clergy in Ireland when the Papal rescripts were issued concerning the Parnell tribute, boycotting, and the Plan of the Campaign was an amusing commentary on their view of Papal Infallibility. Any one who will take the trouble to search the columns of the *Freeman's Journal* at that time will see how freely curates even criticised the Papal infallible utterances. One of them remarked to me at the time, "I think we have taught the old gentleman a lesson he will not forget," referring to the Papal rescripts. Infallibility is very good so long as it is with us, but when against us it becomes very fallible. Such is clearly the view of Irish Roman Catholics.

and freedom from diverging opinions, it would in that case have been very unlike the primitive Church. The Church of Antioch or of Jerusalem, enjoying the ministry of Peter and John and James and Paul,—these pillar-men, as St. Paul calls some of them,—was much more like the Church of England of fifty years ago than any society which offered perfect freedom from theological strife; for the Churches of ancient times in their earliest and purest days were swept by the winds of controversy and tossed by the tempests of intellectual and religious inquiry just like the Church of England, and they took exactly the same measures for the safety of the souls entrusted to them as she did. They depended upon the power of free debate, of unlimited discussion, of earnest prayer, of Christian charity to carry them on till they reached that haven of rest where every doubt and question shall be perfectly solved in the light of the unveiled vision of God.

Then, again, we learn another important lesson from a consideration of the persons who raised the trouble at Antioch. The opening words of the fifteenth chapter thus describes the authors of it: "Certain men came down from Judæa." It is just the same with the persons who a short time after compelled St. Peter to stagger in his course at the same Antioch: "When certain came from James, then St. Peter separated himself, fearing them of the circumcision" (Gal. ii. 12). Certain bigots, that is, of the Jewish party, came, pretending to teach with the authority of the Mother Church, and secretly disturbing weak minds. But they were only pretenders, as the apostolic Epistle expressly tells us: "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; . . . to whom we gave no

such commandment." These religious agitators, with their narrow views about life and ritual, displayed the characteristics of like-minded men ever since. They secretly crept into the Church. There was a want of manly honesty about them. Their pettiness of vision and of thought affected their whole nature, their entire conduct. They loved the by-ways of intrigue and fraud, and therefore they hesitated not to claim an authority which they had never received, invoking apostolic names on behalf of a doctrine which the apostles had never sanctioned. The characteristics thus displayed by these Judaisers have ever been seen in their legitimate descendants in every church and society, East and West alike. Narrowness of mind, pettiness and intolerance in thought, have ever brought their own penalty with them and have ever been connected with the same want of moral uprightness. The miserable conception, the wretched fragment of truth upon which such men seize, elevating it out of its due place and rank, seems to destroy their sense of proportion, and leads them to think it worth any lie which they may tell, any breach of Christian charity of which they may be guilty, any sacrifice of truth and honesty which they may make on behalf of their beloved idol. The Judaisers misrepresented religious truth, and in doing so they misrepresented themselves, and sacrificed the great interests of moral truth in order that they might gain their ends.

IV. The distractions and controversies of Antioch were overruled, however, by the Divine providence to the greater glory of God. As the Judaisers continually appealed to the authority of the Church at Jerusalem, the brethren at Antioch determined to send to that body and ask the opinion of the apostles and elders

upon this question. They therefore despatched "Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them," among whom was Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile convert, as a deputation to represent their own views. When they came to Jerusalem the Antiochene deputies held a series of private conferences with the leading men of Jerusalem. This we learn, not from the Acts of the Apostles, but from St. Paul's independent narrative in Galatians ii., identifying as we do the visit there recorded with the visit narrated in Acts xv.[1] St. Paul here exhibits all that tact and prudence we ever trace in his character. He did not depend solely upon his own authority, his reputation, his success. He felt within himself the conscious guidance of the Divine Spirit aiding and guiding a singularly clear and powerful mind. Yet he disdained no legitimate precaution. He knew that the presence and guidance of the Spirit does not absolve a man anxious for the truth from using all the means in his power to ensure its success. He recognised that the truth, though it must finally triumph, might be eclipsed or defeated for a time through man's neglect and carelessness; and therefore he engaged in a series of private conferences, explaining difficulties, conciliating the support, and gaining the assistance of the most influential members of the Church, including, of course, "James, Cephas, and John, who were reputed to be pillars."

Is there not something very modern in the glimpse thus given us of the negotiations and private meetings which preceded the formal meeting of the Apostolic Council? Some persons may think that the presence and power of the Holy Ghost must have superseded

[1] The reader should consult what Mr. Findlay has written on this point in his *Galatians*, chs. vi. and vii., pp. 92-112.

all such human arrangements and forethought. But the simple testimony of the Bible dispels at once all such objections, and shows us that as the primitive Church was just like the modern Church, torn with dissension, swept with the winds and storms of controversy, so too the divinely guided and inspired leaders of the Church then took precisely the same human means to attain their ends and carry out their views of truth as now find place in the meetings of synods and convocations and parliaments of the present time. The presence of the Holy Ghost did not dispense with the necessity of human exertions in the days of the apostles; and surely we may, on the other hand, believe that similar human exertions in our time may be quite consonant with the presence of the Spirit in our modern assemblies, overruling and guiding human plans and intrigues to the honour of God and the blessing of man. After these private conferences the apostles and elders came together to consider the difficult subject laid before them. And now many questions rise up which we can only very briefly consider. The composition of this Synod is one important point. Who sat in it, and who debated there? It is quite clear, from the text of the Acts, as to the persons who were *present* at this Synod. The sixth verse says, "The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter"; the twelfth verse tells us that "all the multitude kept silence, and hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them"; in the twenty-second verse we read, "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole Church, to choose men out of their company, and to send them to Antioch"; while, finally, in the twenty-third verse we read the super-

scription of the final decree of the Council, which ran thus, "The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia." It seems to me that any plain man reading these verses would come to the conclusion that the whole multitude, the great body of the Church in Jerusalem, were present and took part in this assembly.[1] A great battle indeed has raged round the words of the Authorized Version of the twenty-third verse, "The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles," which are otherwise rendered in the Revised Version. The presence or the absence of the "and" between elders and brethren has formed the battle-ground between two parties, the one upholding, the other opposing the right of the laity to take part in Church synods and councils.

Upon a broad review of the whole affair this Apostolic Assembly seems to me to have an important bearing upon this point. There are various views involved. Some persons think that none but bishops should take part in Church synods; others think that none but clergymen, spiritual persons, in the technical and legal sense of the word "spiritual," should enter these assemblies, specially when treating of questions touching doctrine and discipline.[2] Looking at the subject from

[1] The fifth verse states that after Paul had rehearsed the wonders done among the Gentiles certain of the sect of the Pharisees rose up saying, "It is needful to circumcise them." Some maintain that this was in a missionary meeting before the Synod, but that this is no proof that such laymen, if they were laymen, were allowed to raise the question in the Synod. Of course the next verse states that "the apostles and elders" came together to consider this matter; but it also states that there was much questioning before St. Peter opened his mouth to speak on the subject. Surely the much questioning must have been on the part of the "certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed"!

[2] It is a curious thing that three parties otherwise very much opposed

the standpoint of the Apostolic Council, we cannot agree with either party. We are certainly told of the speeches of four individuals merely—Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James—to whom may be conceded the position of bishops, and even more. But, then, it is evident that the whole multitude of the Church was present at this Synod, and took an active part in it. We are expressly told (vv. 4 and 5): "When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church and the apostles and the elders. . . . But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them." This indeed happened at the first meeting of the Church held to receive the Antiochene deputation when they arrived. But there does not seem to have been any difference between the constitution and authority of the first and second meetings. Both were what we should call Ecclesiastical Assemblies. Laymen joined in the discussions of the first, and doubtless laymen joined in the discussions and much questioning of the second.

There is not indeed a hint which would lead us to

unite in this view: the extreme High Church party in England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Wesleyan Conference, which latter body restrains all questions of doctrine and discipline to ministers alone as rigorously as either of the others. The Presbyterian Assemblies are in many respects open to the same charge, the elders who represent the laity being ordained by imposition of hands as truly as the ministers and signing the same doctrinal tests. I cannot say how far this may be true of the Established Assembly in Scotland, but as far as the Free Church and the Irish General Assemblies are concerned, I am bold to say that no unordained layman sits in them. I was much amused some time ago reading the charge of a Wesleyan President of Conference to the newly ordained ministers of the Irish Conference, when he bid them remember that Christ had entrusted to them alone the care of all questions touching doctrine and discipline. See for the High Anglican theory, which is just the same as the Wesleyan President's, Joyce's *Acts of the Church*, A.D. 1531—1885, p. 12.

conclude that the Pharisees, who rose up and argued on behalf of the binding character of the law of Moses, held any spiritual office whatsoever. So far as the sacred text puts it, they may have been laymen pure and simple, such as were the ordinary Pharisees. I cannot, indeed, see how any member of the Church of England can consistently maintain either from Holy Scripture, ancient ecclesiastical history, or the history of his own Church, that laymen are quite shut out from councils debating questions touching Christian faith, and that their consideration must be limited to bishops, or at least clergymen alone. The Apostolic Church seems to have admitted the freest discussion. The General Councils most certainly tolerated very considerable lay interference. The Emperor Constantine, though not even baptized, obtruded much of his presence and exercised much of his influence upon the great Nicene Council. Why even down to the sixteenth century, till the Tridentine Council, the ambassadors of the great Christian Powers of Europe sat in Church synods as representing the laity; and it was only in the Council of the Vatican, which met in 1870, that even the Roman Catholic Church formally denied the right of the people to exercise a certain influence in the determination of questions touching faith and discipline by the exclusion of the ambassadors who had in every previous council held a certain defined place. While again, when we come to the history of the Church of England, we find that the celebrated Hooker, the vindicator of its Church polity, expressly defended the royal supremacy as exercised within that Church on the ground that the king represented by delegation the vast body of the laity, who through him exercised a real influence upon all questions, whether

of doctrine or discipline. I feel a personal interest in this question, because one of the charges most freely hurled against the Church of Ireland is this, that she has admitted laymen to discussions and votes concerning such questions. I cannot see how consistently with her past history as an established Church she could have done otherwise. I cannot see how the Church of England, if she comes in the future to be disestablished, can do otherwise. That Church has always admitted a vast amount of lay interference, even prior to the Reformation, and still more since that important event. Extreme men may scoff at those branches of their own Communion which have admitted laymen to vote in Church synods upon all questions whatsoever; but they forget when doing so that statements and decrees most dear to themselves bear manifest traces of far more extreme lay intervention. The Ornaments Rubric, standing before the order for Morning Prayer, is a striking evidence of this. It is dear to the hearts of many, because it orders the use of eucharistic vestments and the preservation of the chancels in the ancient style; but on what grounds does it do so? Let the precise words of the rubric be the answer: "Here it is to be noted that such ornaments of the Church and of the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of England, *by the authority of Parliament*, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth." Objections to the determinations, rules, and canons of the Irish Church Synod might have some weight did they profess, as this rubric does, to have been ordained and imposed by the order of laymen alone. But when the bishops of a Church have an independent vote, the clergy an independent vote, the

free and independent vote of the laity is totally powerless by itself to introduce any novelty, and is only powerful to prevent change in the ancient order. I do not feel bound to defend some ill-judged expressions and foolish speeches which some lay representatives may have made in the Irish Church Synod as again no member of the Church of England need trouble himself to defend some rash speeches made in Parliament on Church topics. In the first moments of unaccustomed freedom Irish laymen did and said some rash things, and, overawing the clergy by their fierce expressions, may have caused the introduction of some hasty and ill-advised measures. But sure I am that every sincere member of the Church to which I belong will agree that the admission of the lay representatives to a free discussion and free vote upon every topic has had a marvellous influence in broadening their conceptions of Scripture truth and deepening their affections and attachment to their Mother Church which has treated and trusted them thus generously.[1]

V. The proceedings of the Apostolic Synod next demand our attention. The account which has been handed down is doubtless a mere outline of what actually happened. We are not told anything concerning the opening of the Assembly or how the discussion was begun. St. Luke was intent merely on setting forth the main gist of affairs, and therefore he reports but two speeches and tells of two others. Some Christian Pharisee having put forward his objections to the position occupied by the Gentile converts, St. Peter

[1] I may perhaps be allowed to refer to a little tract of my own on this topic published at the time, on "The Work of the Laity in the Church of Ireland," as embodying the principles of Hooker applied to modern times and needs.

arose, as was natural, he having been the person through whose action the present discussion and trouble had originated. St. Peter's speech is marked on this occasion by the same want of assumption of any higher authority than belonged to his brethren which we have noted before when objections were taken to his dealings with Cornelius. His speech claims nothing for himself, does not even quote the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but simply repeats in a concise shape the story of the conversion of Cornelius, points out that God put no difference between Jew and Gentile, suggesting that if God had put no difference between them why should man dare to do so, and then ends with proclaiming the great doctrine of grace that men, whether Jews or Gentiles, are saved through faith in Christ alone, which purifies their hearts and lives. After Peter's speech there arose James the Lord's brother, who from ancient times has been regarded as the first bishop of Jerusalem, and who most certainly, from the various references to him both here and elsewhere in the Acts (chs. xii. 17, xxi. 18) and in the Epistle to the Galatians, seems to have occupied the supreme place in that Church. James was a striking figure. There is a long account of him left us by Hegesippus, a very ancient Church historian, who bordered on apostolic times, and now preserved for us in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, ii., 23. There he is described as an ascetic and a Nazarite, like John the Baptist, from his earliest childhood. "He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head, he never anointed with oil, and never used the bath. He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary. He never wore woollen, but linen garments.

He was in the habit of entering the Temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, and interceding for the forgiveness of the people; so that his knees became as hard as camels', in consequence of his habitual supplication and kneeling before God. And indeed on account of his exceeding great piety he was called the Just and Oblias, which signifies the Rampart of the People." This description is the explanation of the power and authority of James the Just in the Apostolic Assembly. He was a strict legalist himself. He desired no freedom for his own share, but rejoiced in observances and restrictions far beyond the common lot of the Jews. When such a man pronounced against the attempt made to impose circumcision and the law as a necessary condition of salvation, the Judaisers must have felt that their cause was lost. St. James expressed his views in no uncertain terms. He begins by referring to St. Peter's speech and the conversion of Cornelius. He then proceeds to show how the prophets foretold the ingathering of the Gentiles, quoting a passage (Amos ix. 11, 12) which the Jewish expositors themselves applied to the Messiah. His method of Scriptural interpretation is exactly the same as that of St. Paul and St. Peter. It is very different from ours, but it was the universal method of his day; and when we wish to arrive at the meaning of the Scriptures, or for that matter of any work, we ought to strive and place ourselves at the standpoint and amid the circumstances of the writers and actors. The prophet Amos speaks of the tabernacle of David as fallen down. The rebuilding of it is then foretold, and James sees in the conversion of the Gentiles this predicted rebuilding. He then pronounces in the most decided language against "troubling those who from

among the Gentiles are turned to God" in the matter of legal observances, laying down at the same time the concessions which should be demanded from the Gentiles so as not to cause offence to their Jewish brethren. The sentence thus authoritatively pronounced by the strictest Jewish Christian was naturally adopted by the Apostolic Synod, and they wrote a letter to the disciples in Syria and Cilicia embodying their decision, which for a time settled the controversy which had been raised. This epistle begins by disclaiming utterly and at once the agitators who had gone forth to Antioch and had raised the disturbances. It declared that circumcision was unnecessary for the Gentile converts. This was the great point upon which St. Paul was most anxious. He had no objection, as we have already said, to the Jews observing their legal rites and ceremonies, but he was totally opposed to the Gentiles coming under any such rule as a thing necessary to salvation. The epistle then proceeds to lay down certain concessions which the Gentiles should in turn make. They should abstain from meats offered in sacrifice unto idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication; all of them points upon which the public opinion of the Gentiles laid no stress, but which were most abhorrent to a true Jew. The decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem, as the inspired historian expressly terms them in ch. xvi. 4, were mere temporary expedients. They determined indeed one important question, that circumcision should not be imposed on the Gentiles—that Judaism, in fact, was not in and by itself a saving dispensation; but left unsolved many other questions, even touching this very subject of circumcision and the Jewish law, which had afterwards to be debated and threshed out, as St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

proves. But, turning our eyes from the obsolete controversy which evoked the Apostolic Epistle, and viewing the subject from a wider and a modern standpoint, we may say that the decrees of this primitive Synod narrated in this typical history bestow their sanction upon the great principles of prudence, wisdom, and growth in the Divine life and in Church work. It was with the apostles themselves as with the Church ever since. Apostles even must not make haste, but must be contented to wait upon the developments of God's providence. Perfection is an excellent thing, but then perfection cannot be attained at once. Here a little and there a little is the Divine law under the New as under the Old Dispensation. Truth is the fairest and most excellent of all possessions, but the advocates of truth must not expect it to be grasped in all its bearings by all sorts and conditions of men at one and the same time. They must be content, as St. Paul was, if one step be taken at a time; if progress be in the right and not in the wrong direction; and must be willing to concede much to the feelings and long-descended prejudices of short-sighted human nature.

CHAPTER XI.

APOSTOLIC QUARRELS AND THE SECOND TOUR.

"And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare. . . . And there arose a sharp contention between them, so that they parted asunder one from the other."—ACTS xv. 36, 39.

"And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia. . . . They came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us."—ACTS xvi. 6, 8, 9.

THE second missionary tour of St. Paul now claims our attention, specially because it involves the first proclamation of Christianity by an apostle within the boundaries of Europe. The course of the narrative up to this will show that any Christian effort in Europe by an apostle, St. Peter or any one else prior to St. Paul's work, was almost impossible. To the Twelve and to men like-minded with them, it must have seemed a daring innovation to bring the gospel message directly to bear upon the masses of Gentile paganism. Men of conservative minds like the Twelve doubtless restrained their own efforts up to the time of St. Paul's second tour within the bounds of Israel according to the flesh in Palestine and the neighbouring lands, finding there an ample field upon which to exercise their diligence. And then when we turn to St. Paul

and St. Barnabas, who had dared to realise the freeness and fulness of the gospel message, we shall see that the Syrian Antioch and Syria itself and Asia Minor had hitherto afforded to them scope quite sufficient to engage their utmost attention. A few moments' reflection upon the circumstances of the primitive Christian Church and the developments through which Apostolic Christianity passed are quite sufficient to dispel all such fabulous incrustations upon the original record as those involved in St. Peter's episcopate at Antioch or his lengthened rule over the Church at Rome. If the latter story was to be accepted, St. Peter must have been Bishop of Rome long before a mission was despatched to the Gentiles from Antioch, if not even before the vision was seen at Joppa by St. Peter when the admission of the Gentiles to the Church was first authorised under any terms whatsoever.[1] In fact, it would be impossible to fit the actions of St. Peter into any scheme whatsoever, if we bring him to Rome and make him bishop there for twenty-five years beginning at the year 42, the time usually assigned by Roman Catholic historians. It is hard enough to frame a hypothetical scheme, which will find a due and fitting place for the various recorded actions of St. Peter,

[1] St. Jerome places the beginning of St. Peter's twenty-five years' episcopate at Rome in A.D. 42—that is, two years before Herod's attempt to put St. Peter to death. This idea has been worked up into an elaborate story, which will be found duly set forth in great detail in Fleury's *Ecclesiastical History*, Book I., where St. Peter is made Bishop of Rome prior to the death of Herod Agrippa, whence he despatches disciples to found Churches in various towns of Italy, and whence he writes his first Epistle to the Jews of the Dispersion in Asia Minor. A simple statement of this is sufficient refutation for any one who knows the bare text of the Acts. There seems, however, no reason whatsoever to doubt the ancient tradition which fixes the martyrdom of

quite apart from any supposed Roman episcopate lasting over such an extended period. St. Peter and St. Paul had, for instance, a dispute at Antioch of which we read much in the second chapter of the Galatian Epistle. Where shall we fix that dispute? Some place it during the interval between the Synod at Jerusalem and the second missionary tour of which we now propose to treat. Others place it at the conclusion of that tour, when St. Paul was resting at Antioch for a little after the work of that second journey. As we are not writing the life of St. Paul, but simply commenting upon the narratives of his labours as told in the Acts, we must be content to refer to the Lives of St. Paul by Conybeare and Howson, and Archdeacon Farrar, and to Bishop Lightfoot's *Galatians*, all of whom place this quarrel before the second tour, and to Mr. Findlay's *Galatians* in our own series, who upholds the other view. Supposing, however, that we take the former view in deference to the weighty authorities just mentioned, we then find that there were two serious quarrels which must for a time have marred the unity and Christian concord of the Antiochene Church.

The reproof of St. Peter by St. Paul for his dissimu-

St. Peter at Rome. See on the whole subject the interesting article on St. Peter in Schaff's *Encyclopædia of Theology*, p. 1814. In the *Acta Sanctorum*, published by the Bollandists, April, vol. iii., p. 346, we are told that St. Peter despatched St. Mark to found the Church of Aquileia, which claims the next rank to the Church of Rome among the Italian sees. In fact, the Bishops of Aquileia regarded themselves as of such importance, owing to their apostolic origin, that they headed a separation from the Church of Rome, which lasted from about A.D. 570 to 700. See Robertson's *History of the Church*, ii., p. 306, and the authorities there quoted, on this interesting anticipation of the Reformation in England.

lation was made on a public occasion before the whole Church. It must have caused considerable excitement and discussion, and raised much human feeling in Antioch. Barnabas too, the chosen friend and companion of St. Paul, was involved in the matter, and must have felt himself condemned in the strong language addressed to St. Peter. This may have caused for a time a certain amount of estrangement between the various parties. A close study of the Acts of the Apostles dispels at once the notion men would fain cherish, that the apostles and the early Christians lived just like angels without any trace of human passion or discord. The apostles had their differences and misunderstandings very like our own. Hot tempers and subsequent coolnesses arose, and produced evil results between men entrusted with the very highest offices, and paved the way, as quarrels always do, for fresh disturbances at some future time. So it was at Antioch, where the public reproof of St. Peter by St. Paul involved St. Barnabas, and may have left traces upon the gentle soul of the Son of Consolation which were not wholly eradicated by the time that a new source of trouble arose.

The ministry of St. Paul at Antioch was prolonged for some time after the Jerusalem Synod, and then the Holy Ghost again impelled him to return and visit all the Churches which he had founded in Cyprus and Asia Minor. He recognised the necessity for supervision, support, and guidance as far as the new converts were concerned. The seed might be from heaven and the work might be God's own, but still human effort must take its share and do its duty, or else the work may fail and the good seed never attain perfection. St. Paul therefore proposed to Barnabas a second joint

mission, intending to visit "the brethren in every city wherein they had proclaimed the word of the Lord." Barnabas desired to take with them his kinsman Mark, but Paul, remembering his weakness and defection on their previous journey, would have nothing to say to the young man. Then there arose a sharp contention between them, or, as the original expression is, there arose a paroxysm between the apostles, so that the loving Christian workers and friends of bygone years, "men who had hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," separated the one from the other, and worked from henceforth in widely different localities.

I. There are few portions of the Acts more fruitful in spiritual instruction, or teeming with more abundant lessons, or richer in application to present difficulties, than this very incident. Let us note a few of them. One thought, for instance, which occurs at once to any reflecting mind is this: what an extraordinary thing it is that two such holy and devoted men as Paul and Barnabas should have had a quarrel at all; and when they did quarrel, would it not have been far better to have hushed the matter up and never have let the world know anything at all about it? Now I do not say that it is well for Christian people always to proclaim aloud and tell the world at large all about the various unpleasant circumstances of their lives, their quarrels, their misunderstandings, their personal failings and backslidings. Life would be simply intolerable did we live always, at all times, and under all circumstances beneath the full glare of publicity. Personal quarrels too, family jars and bickerings have a rapid tendency to heal themselves, if kept in the gloom, the soft, toned, shaded light of retirement. They have an unhappy tendency to harden and perpetuate

themselves when dragged beneath the fierce light of public opinion and the outside world. Yet it is well for the Church at large that such a record has been left for us of the fact that the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas waxed so fierce that they departed the one from the other, to teach us what we are apt to forget, the true character of the apostles. Human nature is intensely inclined to idolatry. One idol may be knocked down, but as soon as it is displaced the heart straightway sets to work to erect another idol in its stead, and men have been ready to make idols of the apostles. They have been ready to imagine them supernatural characters, tainted with no sin, tempted by no passion, weakened by no infirmity. If these incidents had not been recorded—the quarrel with Peter and the quarrel with Barnabas—we should have been apt to forget that the apostles were men of like passions with ourselves, and thus to lose the full force —the bracing, stimulating force—of such exhortations as that delivered by St. Paul when he said to a primitive Church, "Follow me, as I, a poor, weak, failing, passionate man, have followed Christ." We have the thorough humanity of the apostles vigorously presented and enforced in this passage. There is no suppression of weak points, no accentuation of strong points, no hiding of defects and weaknesses, no dwelling upon virtues and graces. We have the apostles presented at times vigorous, united, harmonious; at other times weak, timorous, and cowardly.

Again, we note that this passage not only shows us the human frailties and weaknesses which marked the apostles, and found a place in characters and persons called to the very highest places; it has also a lesson for the Church of all time in the circumstances which

led to the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas. We do well to mark carefully that Antioch saw two such quarrels, the one of which, as we have already pointed out, may have had something to say to the other. The quarrel between St. Paul and St. Peter indeed has a history which strikingly illustrates this tendency of which we have just now spoken. Some expositors, jealous of the good fame and reputation and temper of the apostles, have explained the quarrel at Antioch between St. Paul and St. Peter as not having been a real quarrel at all, but an edifying piece of acting, a dispute got up between the apostles to enforce and proclaim the freedom of the Gentiles, a mere piece of knavery and deception utterly foreign to such a truth-loving character as was St. Paul's.[1] It is interesting, however, to note as manifesting their natural characteristics, which were not destroyed, but merely elevated, purified, and sanctified by Divine grace, that the apostles Paul and Barnabas quarrelled about a purely personal matter. They had finished their first missionary tour on which they had been accompanied by St. Mark, who

[1] "Origen started this theory that the dispute between Peter and Paul was simulated; in other words, being of one mind in the matter they got up this scene that St. Paul might the more effectually condemn the Judaisers through the chief of the apostles, who, acknowledging the justice of the rebuke, set them an example of submission. Thus he, in fact, substituted the much graver charge of dishonesty against both apostles in order to exculpate the one from the comparatively venial offence of moral cowardice and inconsistency. Nevertheless this view commended itself to a large number of subsequent writers, and for some time may be said to have reigned supreme." (Lightfoot's *Galatians*, p. 129.) St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome maintained the same view, while St. Augustine opposed it. The epistles exchanged between Jerome and Augustine on this topic are very interesting. They may be most easily perused in Augustine's *Epistles*, vol. i., pp. 131 and 280, as translated in T. & T. Clark's series (Edinburgh, 1872).

had acted as their attendant or servant, carrying, we may suppose, their luggage, and discharging all the subordinate offices such service might involve. The labour and toil and personal danger incident to such a career were too much for the young man. So with all the fickleness, the weakness, the want of strong definite purpose we often find in young people, he abandoned his work simply because it involved the exercise of a certain amount of self-sacrifice. And now, when Paul and Barnabas are setting out again, and Barnabas wishes to take the same favourite relative with them,[1] St. Paul naturally objects, and then the bitter passionate quarrel ensues. St. Paul just experienced here what we all must more or less experience, the crosses and trials of public life, if we wish to pass through that life with a good conscience. Public life, I say—and I mean thereby not political life, which alone we usually dignify by that name, but the ordinary life which every man and every woman amongst us must live as we go in and out and discharge our duties amid our fellow-men,—public life, the life we live once we leave our closet communion with God in the early morning till we return thereto in the eventide, is in all its departments most trying. It is trying to temper, and it is trying to principle, and no one can hope to pass through it without serious and grievous temptations. I do not wonder that men have often felt, as the old Eastern monks did, that salvation was more easily won

[1] Mark is usually regarded as nephew to Barnabas. This opinion is grounded upon Col. iv. 10, as translated in the Authorised Version. They were, however, cousins merely. The Revised Version translates Col. iv. 10 thus: "Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." Dr. Lightfoot, in his *Colossians*, p. 236, has a long note showing that the word used about St. Mark in that passage is ὁ ἀνεψιός, which always means cousin german: see Thayer's edition of Grimm's *Lexicon of New Testament*, s.v.

in solitude than in living and working amid the busy haunts of men where bad temper and hot words so often conspire to make one return home from a hard day's work feeling miserable within on account of repeated falls and shortcomings. Shall we then act as they did? Shall we shut out the world completely and cease to take any part in a struggle which seems to tell so disastrously upon the equable calm of our spiritual life? Nay indeed, for such a course would be unworthy a soldier of the Cross, and very unlike the example shown by the blessed apostle St. Paul, who had to battle not only against others, but had also to battle against himself and his own passionate nature, and was crowned as a victor, not because he ran away, but because he conquered through the grace of Christ.

And now it is well that we should note the special trials he had to endure. He had to fight against the spirit of cowardly self-indulgence in others, and he had to fight against the spirit of jobbery. These things indeed caused the rupture in the apostolic friendship. St. Barnabas, apostle though he was, thought far more of the interests of his cousin than of the interests of Christ's mission. St. Paul with his devotion to Christ may have been a little intolerant of the weakness of youth, but he rightly judged that one who had proved untrustworthy before should not be rapidly and at once trusted again. And St. Paul was thoroughly right, and has left a very useful and practical example. Many young men among us are like St. Mark. The St. Marks of our own day are a very numerous class. They have no respect for their engagements. They will undertake work and allow themselves to be calculated upon, and arrangements to be made accordingly. But then comes the stress of action, and their place is found wanting,

and the work undertaken by them is found undone. And then they wonder and complain that their lives are unsuccessful, and that men and women who are in earnest will not trust or employ them in the future! These are the men who are the social wrecks in life. They proclaim loudly in streets and highways the hard treatment which they have received. They tell forth their own misery, and speak as if they were the most deserving and at the same time the most ill-treated of men; and yet they are but reaping as they have sown, and their failures and their misfortunes are only the due and fitting rewards of their want of earnestness, diligence, and self-denial. To the young this episode proclaims aloud: Respect your engagements, regard public employments as solemn contracts in God's sight. Take pains with your work. Be willing to endure any trouble for its sake. There is no such thing as genius in ordinary life. Genius has been well defined as an infinite capacity for taking pains. And thus avoid the miserable weakness of St. Mark, who fled from his work because it entailed trouble and self-denial on his part.

Then, again, we view St. Paul with admiration because he withstood the spirit of jobbery when it displayed itself even in a saint. Barnabas in plain language wished to perpetrate a job in favour of a member of his family, and St. Paul withstood him. And how often since has the same spirit thus displayed itself to the injury of God's cause! Let us note how the case stood. St. Barnabas was a good pious man of very strong emotional feelings. But he allowed himself to be guided, as pious people often do, by their emotions, affections, prejudices, not by their reason and judgment. With such men when their

affections come into play jobbery is the most natural thing in the world. It is the very breath of their nostrils. It is the atmosphere in which they revel. Barnabas loved his cousin John Mark, with strong, powerful, absorbing love, and that emotion blinded Barnabas to Mark's faults, and led him on his behalf to quarrel with his firmer, wiser, and more vigorous friend. Jobbery is a vice peculiar to no age and to no profession. It flourishes in the most religious as in the most worldly circles. In religious circles it often takes the most sickening forms, when miserable, narrow selfishness assumes the garb and adopts the language of Christian piety. St. Paul's action proclaims to Christian men a very needful lesson. It says, in fact, Set your faces against jobbery of every kind. Regard power, influence, patronage as a sacred trust. Permit not fear, affection, or party spirit to blind your eyes or prejudice your judgment against real merit; so shall you be following in the footsteps of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, with his heroic championship of that which was righteous and true, and of One higher still, for thus you shall be following the Master's own example, whose highest praise was this: "He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity."[1]

[1] The sequel of this story as made known through the Epistles is most interesting. The quarrel between St. Paul and St. Barnabas was not a permanent one. Five years or so later, when writing the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians (ix. 6), St. Paul associates himself with Barnabas as if they were companions once again: "Or I only, and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working?" It is interesting too to trace the change that came in subsequent years over the relations between St. Paul and St. Mark as revealed by the Epistles. About the year 50 St. Paul treated Mark sternly, and that same sternness was most beneficial to the young man. It was just what his character wanted. Fifteen years passed over both their heads, and the scene was then very different. In Col. iv. 10, 11 Mark is commended

We have now bestowed a lengthened notice upon this quarrel, because it corrects a very mistaken notion about the apostles, and shows us how thoroughly natural and human, how very like our own, was the everyday life of the primitive Church. It takes away the false halo of infallibility and impeccability with which we are apt to invest the apostles, making us view them as real, fallible, weak, sinful men like ourselves,[1] and thereby exalts the power of that grace

unto the Church of Colossæ as one of the few Jewish Christians who had been a comfort in his bonds to the prisoner of Jesus Christ; while again, when on the point of his departure, in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, iv. 11, the once weak disciple is most touchingly and lovingly remembered: "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is useful to me for ministering." St. Mark, after being the cause of this quarrel, appears no more in the Acts. The traditions about him will be found collected in English in Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals*, under his Feast Day, April 25th; or better still in Cave's *Lives of the Apostles*, pp. 217-23 (London, 1684); and in Latin in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Ed. Boll., April, iii., 344-58. Cave and the Bollandists give all the traditions about his foundation of the Church of Alexandria, the patriarchs of which still claim descent from him. Some historical writers have maintained, that they used to be ordained by the imposition of St. Mark's dead hand. This seems a mistake, however. Mr. Butler, in his *Coptic Churches of Egypt*, vol. ii., p. 311, says that the newly ordained Patriarch of Alexandria used to hold St. Mark's head in his hands during the celebration of Mass after his consecration. (See also COPTIC CHURCH in *Dict. Christ. Biog.*). Renaudot, a learned French writer, published a history of the Alexandrian Patriarchate in 1713, which industriously collects all the details of St. Mark's life true and imaginary alike. St. Mark's supposed body was carried to Venice from Alexandria about A.D. 1235.

[1] It is curious to note how widespread is this notion that the apostles always possessed supernatural powers in virtue of their office, enabling them, for instance, infallibly to read men's hearts and thoughts. In a letter in the *Church Times* for August 19th, 1892, from an eminent dignitary of the Church of England, I noticed an example of it. He was discussing a question with which I have nothing to say, and in doing so writes: "The commission given by our Lord to the apostles cannot

which made them so eminent in Christian character, so abundant in Christian labours. Let us now apply ourselves to trace the course of St. Paul's second tour.

The effect of the quarrel between the friends was that St. Paul took Silas and St. Barnabas took Mark, and they separated; the latter going to Cyprus, the native country of Barnabas, while Paul and Silas devoted themselves to Syria and Asia Minor and their Churches. The division between these holy men became thus doubly profitable to the Church of Christ. It is perpetually profitable, by way of warning and example, as we have just now shown; and then it became profitable because it led to two distinct missions being carried on, the one in the island of Cyprus, the other on the continent of Asia. The wrath of man is thus again overruled to the greater glory of God, and human weakness is made to promote the interests of the gospel. We read, too, "they parted asunder the one from the other." How very differently they acted from the manner in which modern Christians do! Their difference in opinion did not lead them to depart into exactly the same district, and there pursue a policy of opposition the one against the other. They sought

be used in precisely the same sense by ourselves. The apostles' powers were miraculous. . . . They could tell whether the condition of the soul of the recipient of their gifts was right or the reverse in a manner not possible for us. . . . They could perceive and gauge faith in a way that is not our prerogative. . . . It is clear that the apostles could have perceived whether repentance and faith were genuine." I do not deny that God sometimes made such special revelations to them. But *quâ* apostles they had no such gift of discerning spirits, else why did Peter baptize Simon Magus, or St. Paul and Barnabas take Mark with them at all, or St. Paul tolerate Demas even for a moment, or why did he not indicate the "grievous wolves" who should ravage the Ephesian Church after his departure?

rather districts widely separated, where their social differences could have no effect upon the cause they both loved. How very differently modern Christians act, and how very disastrous the consequent results! How very scandalous, how very injurious to Christ's cause, when Christian missionaries of different communions appear warring one with another in face of the pagan world! Surely the world of paganism is wide enough and large enough to afford scope for the utmost efforts of all Christians without European Christendom exporting its divisions and quarrels to afford matter for mockery to scoffing idolaters! We have heard lately a great deal about the differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Central Africa, terminating in war and bloodshed and in the most miserable recriminations threatening the peace and welfare of the nations of Europe. Surely there must have been an error of judgment somewhere or another in this case, and Africa must be ample enough to afford abundant room for the independent action of the largest bodies of missionaries without resorting to armed conflicts which recall the religious wars between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Cantons of Switzerland! With the subsequent labours of Barnabas we have nothing to do, as he now disappears from the Acts of the Apostles,[1] though it would appear from a reference by St. Paul—1 Cor. ix. 6, "Or I only, and

[1] Ecclesiastical history and tradition tell us more about Barnabas and Cyprus. They represent Barnabas as the Apostle of the Church of Cyprus. This idea played a prominent part in the fifth century. The ancient connection between Antioch and Cyprus was then kept up, and the patriarchs of Antioch wished to subject the Archbishop and Bishops of Cyprus to their rule. The Seventh Session of the Great Council of Ephesus, which dealt with the Nestorian controversy, was

Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working?"—as if at that time four or five years after the quarrel they were again labouring together at Ephesus, where First Corinthians was written, or else why should Barnabas be mentioned in that connexion at all?

Let us now briefly indicate the course of St. Paul's labours during the next three years, as his second missionary tour must have extended over at least that space of time. St. Paul and his companion Silas left Antioch amid the prayers of the whole Church Evidently the brethren viewed Paul's conduct with approbation, and accompanied him therefore with fervent supplications for success in his self-denying labours. He proceeded by land into Cilicia and Asia Minor, and wherever he went he delivered the apostolic decree in order that he might counteract the workings of the Judaisers. This decree served a twofold purpose. It relieved the minds of the Gentile brethren with respect

engaged with this question of Cyprus. The session was held on July 31st, 431. The Cypriote bishops claimed that they had been free from the dominion of Antioch back to apostolic times, and the Council confirmed their freedom: see Mansi's *Councils*, iv., 1465—1470; Hefele's *Councils* (T. & T. Clark's translation), vol. ii., p. 72. Forty years later the same claim was advanced by the celebrated Peter the Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch, and resisted by Anthemius, Bishop of Salamis or Constantia. The bishops of Cyprus were again successful, owing to the timely discovery of the body of Barnabas lying in a tomb with a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew upon his heart, which, according to the opinion of the times, settled the point in dispute: see Anthemius in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. i., p. 118. Cave, in his *Apostolici, or Lives of the Fathers*, pp. 33-43, diligently collects every scrap of information about St. Barnabas. An early tradition found in the Clementine *Recognitions*, lib. i., cap. 7, and dating from about A.D. 200, makes him the first apostle to preach in Rome, preceding St. Peter himself, against which theory as trenching on St. Peter's prerogatives Cardinal Baronius disputes very vigorously in his *Annals*, A.D. 51, lii.-liv.; see also Dr. Salmon on Clementine Literature in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, i., 568.

to the law and its observances, and it also showed to them that the Jerusalem Church and apostles recognised the Divine authority and apostolate of St. Paul himself, which these "false brethren" from Jerusalem had already assailed, as they did four or five years later both in Galatia and at Corinth. We know not what special towns St. Paul visited in Cilicia, but we may be sure that the Church of Tarsus, his native place, where in the first fervour of his conversion he had already laboured for a considerable period, must have received a visit from him. We may be certain that his opponents would not leave such an important town unvisited, and we may be equally certain that St. Paul, who, as his Epistles show, was always keenly alive to the opinion of his converts with respect to his apostolic authority, would have been specially anxious to let his fellow townsmen at Tarsus see that he was no unauthorised or false teacher, but that the Jerusalem Church recognised his work and teaching in the amplest manner.

Starting then anew from Tarsus, Paul and Silas set out upon an enormous journey, penetrating, as few modern travellers even now do, from the south-eastern extremity of Asia Minor to the north-western coast, a journey which, with its necessarily prolonged delays, must have taken them at least a year and a half. St. Paul seems to have carefully availed himself of the Roman road system. We are merely given the very barest outline of the course which he pursued, but then when we take up the index maps of Asia Minor inserted in Ramsay's *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, showing the road systems at various periods, we see that a great Roman road followed the very route which St. Paul took. It started from Tarsus and passed to Derbe,

whence of course the road to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch had already been traversed by St. Paul.[1] He must have made lengthened visits to all these places, as he had much to do and much to teach. He had to expound the decree of the Apostolic Council, to explain Christian truth, to correct the errors and abuses which were daily creeping in, and to enlarge the organisation of the Christian Church by fresh ordinations. Take the case of Timothy as an example of the trouble St. Paul must have experienced. He came to Derbe, where he first found some of the converts made on his earlier tour; whence he passed to Lystra, where he met Timothy, whose acquaintance he had doubtless made on his first journey. He was the son of a Jewess, though his father was a Gentile. St. Paul took and circumcised him to conciliate the Jews. The Apostle must have bestowed a great deal of trouble on this point alone, explaining to the Gentile portion of the Christian community the principles on which he acted and their perfect consistency with his own conduct at Jerusalem and his advocacy of Gentile freedom from the law. Then he ordained him. This we do not learn from the Acts, but from St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy. The Acts simply says of Timothy, "Him would Paul have to go forth with him." But then when we turn to the Epistles written to Timothy, we find that it was not as an ordinary companion that

[1] The record of a very similar journey performed five years ago in July 1887 may be read in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for April 1890. Mr. D. G. Hogarth, who writes the story, travelled on that occasion from the borders of Galatia to the Cilician coast. His narrative gives a vivid picture of the scenery over the Taurus Range as St. Paul must have seen it on this second missionary tour, and of the difficulties by which he must have been surrounded. Cf. Ramsay's *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 362.

Timothy was taken. He went forth as St. Paul himself had gone forth from the Church of Antioch, a duly ordained and publicly recognised messenger of Christ. We can glean from St. Paul's letters to Timothy the order and ceremonies of this primitive ordination. The rite, as ministered on that occasion, embraced prophesyings or preachings by St. Paul himself and by others upon the serious character of the office then undertaken. This seems plainly intimated in 1 Tim. i. 18: "This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee"; while there seems a reference to his own exhortations and directions in 2 Tim. ii. 2, where he writes, "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men." After this there was probably, as in modern ordinations, a searching examination of the candidate, with a solemn profession of faith on his part, to which St. Paul refers in 1 Tim. vi. 12, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and *didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.* I charge thee in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." And finally there came the imposition of hands, in which the local presbyters assisted St. Paul, though St. Paul was so far the guiding and ruling personage that, though in one place (1 Tim. iv. 14) he speaks of the gift of God which Timothy possessed, as given "by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," in another place he describes it as given to the young evangelist by the imposition of St. Paul's own hands

(2 Tim. i. 6). This ordination of Timothy[1] and adoption of him as his special attendant stood at the very beginning of a prolonged tour throughout the central and northern districts of Asia Minor, of which we get only a mere hint in Acts xvi. 6-8: "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and passing by Mysia, they came unto Troas." This is the brief sketch of St. Paul's labours through the north-western provinces of Asia Minor, during which he visited the district of Galatia and preached the gospel amid the various tribal communities of Celts who inhabited that district.

St. Paul's work in Galatia is specially interesting to ourselves. The Celtic race certainly furnished the groundwork of the population in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and finds to this day lineal representatives in the Celtic-speaking inhabitants of these three islands. Galatia was thoroughly Celtic in St. Paul's day. But how, it may be said, did the Gauls come there? We all know of the Gauls or Celts in Western Europe, and every person of even moderate education has

[1] Cave has a long account of Timothy in his *Apostolici, or Lives of the Fathers*, pp. 45-53, where he gives an account of Timothy's martyrdom at Ephesus from Photius, the celebrated Greek scholar and patriarch of the ninth century: see Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 254, and the *Acta Sanctorum* for January, vol. ii., pp. 562-69. Timothy is said in the Martyrologies to have been buried on Mount Prion, a hill upon the side of which ancient Ephesus was built (see Wood's *Ephesus*, chap. i.), after he was cruelly put to death by the Ephesians enraged at his protest against one of their popular feasts. He suffered under Domitian about thirty years after St. Paul, and according to Photius was succeeded at Ephesus by St. John, who had been recalled from exile. His feast-day in the Calendar is January 24th.

heard of the Gauls who invaded Italy and sacked Rome when that city was yet an unknown factor in the world's history, and yet but very few know that the same wave of invasion which brought the Gauls to Rome led another division of them into Asia Minor, where—as Dr. Lightfoot shows in his Introduction to his Commentary—about three hundred years before St. Paul's day they settled down in the region called after them Galatia, perpetuating in that neighbourhood the tribal organisation, the language,[1] the national feelings, habits, and customs which have universally marked the Celtic race whether in ancient or in modern times. St. Paul on this second missionary tour paid his first visit to this district of Galatia. St. Paul usually directed his attention to great cities. Where vast masses of humanity were gathered together, there St. Paul loved to fling himself with all the mighty force of his unquenchable enthusiasm. But Galatia was

[1] The provinces of Asia Minor all retained their ancient languages at the time of St. Paul. Latin and Greek were the language of society, but the mass of the people all spoke the original language of the country. In the time of St. Jerome, four centuries after St. Paul, Celtic was still spoken in Galatia as well as in Gaul. St. Paul must then have heard a language identical with that of Wales and the western districts of Ireland and Scotland, as is shown by Bishop Lightfoot in his *Galatians*, pp. 240-44, by his analysis of the remains of the Galatian language which ancient writers have handed down to us. Texier, a modern French traveller, thought that he could even trace Celtic features in the present inhabitants of the district. Cf. Lightfoot's *Galatians*, p. 12. It is very probable that a careful study of the existing language of Galatia, when treated according to the methods of modern scientific philology, would disclose Celtic elements. When Celtic elements survived in England and France, it is not likely they died out in Galatia. We know at any rate that the other original languages of Asia Minor have not perished without leaving some traces behind. There is a learned Review published at Smyrna from time to time. It is called the *Museum of the Evangelical School of Smyrna*. In the

quite unlike other districts with which he had dealt in this special respect. Like the Celtic race all the world over, the Gauls of Galatia specially delighted in village communities. They did not care for the society and tone of great towns, and Galatia was wanting in such. St. Paul, too, does not seem originally to have intended to labour amongst the Galatians at all. In view of his great design to preach in large cities, and concentrate his efforts where they could most effectually tell upon the masses, he seems to have been hurrying through Galatia when God laid His heavy hand upon the Apostle and delayed his course that we might be able to see how the gospel could tell upon Gauls and Celts even as upon other nations. This interesting circumstance is made known to us by St. Paul himself in the Epistle to the Galatians iv. 13: "Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you for the first time." Paul, to put it

volume published for 1880-84 there is an article of more than 200 pages treating of the ancient Cappadocian and Lycaonian dialects, and the traces of them which remain. On p. 71 there is a notice of the accuracy with which Acts xiv. 11 mentions the speech or dialect of the men of Lystra, which Mr. Hogarth, in the article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, April 1890, p. 157, to which we have already referred, identifies with the Phrygian dialect spoken till the sixth century of our era. Mr. Hogarth copied several inscriptions in this ancient Lycaonian or Phrygian speech. See also an English article by Professor W. M. Ramsay in Kühn's *Journal of Comparative Philology* for 1887, where he treats of this Lycaonian speech, and avows his belief (p. 382) that Græco-Roman civilisation and language did not begin to affect the rural parts of Northern and Eastern Phrygia till A.D. 100, long after St. Paul's day. The mass of the people spoke nothing but the original Phrygian. The reader who wishes to investigate what I consider the bearing of this subject on the gift of tongues should consult another article in English by Professor Ramsay, styled *Laodicea Combusta*, in the Transactions of the German Archæological Institute, vol. xiii., p. 248 (Athens, 1888).

in plain language, fell sick in Galatia.[1] He was delayed on his journey by the ophthalmia or some other form of disease, which was his thorn in the flesh, and then, utilising the compulsory delay, and turning every moment to advantage, he evangelised the village communities of Galatia with which he came in contact, so that his Epistle is directed, not as in other cases to the Church of a city or to an individual man, but the Epistle in which he deals with great fundamental questions of Christian freedom is addressed to the Churches of Galatia, a vast district of country. Mere accident, as it would seem to the eye of sense, produced the Epistle to the Galatians, which shows us the peculiar weakness and the peculiar strength of the Celtic race, their enthusiasm, their genuine warmth, their fickleness, their love for that which is striking, showy, material, exterior.[2] But when we pass from Galatia we know nothing of the course of St. Paul's further labours in Asia Minor. St. Luke was not with him during this portion of his work, and so the details given us are very few. We are told that "the Spirit of Jesus" would not permit him to preach in Bithynia, though Bithynia became afterwards rich in Christian Churches, and was one of the districts to which St. Peter some years later addressed his first Epistle.[3] The Jews were numerous

[1] See Lightfoot's *Galatians*, pp. 22 and 172.

[2] Those who have access to great libraries will see a good description of Galatia accompanied with splendid plates in Texier's *Description de l'Asie*, in 3 vols. folio, published at Paris between 1839 and 1849. Mr. Lewin has reproduced some of the pictures in his *Life of St. Paul.*

[3] We owe one of the earliest glimpses of the Christian Church after apostolic days to this same province of Bithynia. Pliny went there as proconsul about 110 A.D. He found the whole country covered with Christians, and the Church organised, with deaconesses even, as in Greece and Ephesus. See the first volume of this commentary, p. 274.

in the districts of Bithynia and Asia, and "the Spirit of Jesus" or "the Holy Ghost"—for the sacred writer seems to use the terms as equivalent the one to the other—had determined to utilise St. Paul in working directly among the Gentiles, reserving the preaching of the gospel to the Dispersion, as the scattered Jews were called, to St. Peter and his friends. It is thus we would explain the restraint exercised upon St. Paul on this occasion. Divine providence had cut out his great work in Europe, and was impelling him westward even when he desired to tarry in Asia. How the Spirit exercised this restraint or communicated His will we know not. St. Paul lived, however, in an atmosphere of Divine communion. He cultivated perpetually a sense of the Divine presence, and those who do so, experience a guidance of which the outer world knows nothing. Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in one of his marvellous spiritual discourses called the *Via Intelligentiæ*, or The Way of Knowledge, speaks much on this subject, pointing out that they who live closest to God have a knowledge and a love peculiar to themselves.[1] And surely every

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The picture of the saintly slave deaconesses tortured for their faith within ten years of St. John's death is an interesting confirmation of the faith. It would be instructive to trace back the connexion of the second-century martyrs who have been well authenticated, with the Churches founded by the apostles. Justin Martyr suffered, for instance, at Rome about A.D. 165. With him there died Hierax, who had been born of Christian parents at Iconium. His grandfather might have been converted by St. Paul. In his examination he dwells upon the fact that he had been born of believing parents. See Ruinart's *Acta Sincera* p. 44, a translation of which passage will be found in the works of Justin Martyr, in Clark's Series of Ante-Nicene Writers.

[1] See this sermon in Taylor's works, vol. viii., Ed. C. P. Eden (London, 1850). On p. 380 we find the following eloquent and profound passage bearing on this point: "Lastly there is a sort of God's dear servants who walk in perfectness, who perfect holiness in the fear of God, and

sincere and earnest follower of Christ has experienced somewhat of the same mystical blessings! God's truest servants commit their lives and their actions in devout prayer to the guidance of their heavenly Father, and then when they look back over the past they see how marvellously they have been restrained from courses which would have been fraught with evil, how strangely they have been led by ways which have been full of mercy and goodness and blessing. Thus it was that St. Paul was at length led down to the ancient city of Troas, where God revealed to him in a new fashion his ordained field of labour. A man of Macedonia appeared in a night vision inviting him over to Europe, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Troas was a very fitting place in which this vision should appear. Of old time and in days of classic fable Troas had been the meeting-place where, as Homer and as Virgil tell, Europe and Asia had met in stern conflict, and where Europe as represented by Greece had come off victorious, bringing home the spoils which human nature counted most precious. Europe and Asia again meet at Troas, but no longer in carnal con-

they have a degree of charity and divine knowledge more than we can discourse of, and more certain than the demonstrations of geometry, brighter than the sun and indeficient as the light of heaven. This is called by the Apostle the ἀπαύγασμα τοῦ θεοῦ. Christ is this 'brightness of God' manifested in the hearts of His dearest servants. But I shall say no more of this at this time, for this is to be felt and not to be talked of; and they that have never touched it with their finger, may secretly perhaps laugh at it in their heart, and be never the wiser. All that I have now to say of it is, that a good man is united unto God, κέντρον κέντρῳ συνάψας, as a flame touches a flame and combines into splendour and glory; so is the spirit of a man united unto Christ by the Spirit of God. These are the friends of God, and they best know God's mind, and they only that are so know how much such men do know. They have a special unction from above."

flict or in deadly fight. The interests of Europe and of Asia again touch one another, and Europe again carries off from the same spot spoil more precious far than Grecian poet ever dreamt of, for "when Paul had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God called us for to preach the gospel unto them." Whereupon we notice two points and offer just two observations. The vision created an enthusiasm, and that enthusiasm was contagious. The vision was seen by Paul alone, but was communicated by St. Paul unto Silas and to St. Luke, who now had joined to lend perhaps the assistance of his medical knowledge to the afflicted and suffering Apostle. Enthusiasm is a marvellous power, and endows a man with wondrous force. St. Paul was boiling over with enthusiasm, but he could not always impart it. The two non-apostolic Evangelists are marked contrasts as brought before us in this history. St. Paul was enthusiastic on his first tour, but that enthusiasm was not communicated to St. Mark. He turned back from the hardships and dangers of the work in Asia Minor. St. Paul was boiling over again with enthusiasm for the new work in Europe. He has now with him in St. Luke a congenial soul who, when he hears the vision, gathers at once its import, joyfully anticipates the work, and "straightway sought to go forth into Macedonia." Enthusiasm in any kind of work is a great assistance, and nothing great or successful is done without it. But above all in Divine work, in the work of preaching the gospel, the man devoid of enthusiasm begotten of living communion with God such as St. Paul and St. Luke enjoyed is sure to be a lamentable and complete failure.

Then again, and lastly, we note the slow progress of

the gospel as shown to us by this incident at Troas. Here we are a good twenty years after the Crucifixion, and yet the chief ministers and leaders of the Church had not yet crossed into Europe. There were sporadic Churches here and there. At Rome and at possibly a few Italian seaports, whence intercourse with Palestine was frequent, there were small Christian communities; but Macedonia and Greece were absolutely untouched up to the present. We are very apt to overrate the progress of the gospel during those first days of the Church's earliest Church life. We are inclined to view the history of the Church of the first three centuries all on an heap as it were. We have much need to distinguish century from century and decennium from decennium. The first ten years of the Church's history saw the gospel preached in Jerusalem and Palestine, but not much farther. The second decennium saw it proclaimed to Asia Minor; but it is only when the third decennium is opening that Christ despatches a formal mission to that Europe where the greatest triumphs of the gospel were afterwards to be won. Ignorance and prejudice and narrow views had been allowed to hinder the progress of the gospel then, as they are hindering the progress of the gospel still; and an express record of this has been handed down to us in this typical history in order that if we too suffer the same we may not be astonished as if some strange thing had happened, but may understand that we are bearing the same burden and enduring the same trials as the New Testament saints have borne before us.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. PAUL IN MACEDONIA.

"The jailor called for lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house"—ACTS xvi. 29-31.

"When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures. . . . And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night into Berœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews."—ACTS xvii. 1, 2, 10.

TROAS was at this time the termination of St. Paul's Asiatic travels. He had passed diagonally right through Asia Minor, following the great Roman roads which determined his line of march. From Troas he proceeded to Philippi, and for exactly the same reason. All the great roads formed under the emperors down to the time of Constantine the Great led to Rome. When the seat of empire was moved to Constantinople, all the Asiatic roads converged upon that city; but in St. Paul's day Rome was the world's centre of attraction, and thither the highways all tended. This fact explains St. Paul's movements. The Egnatian Road was one of the great channels of communication established for State purposes by Rome, and this road ran from Neapolis, where St. Paul landed, through Philippi on

to Dyrrachium, a port on the Adriatic, whence the traveller took ship to Brundusium, the modern Brindisi, and thence reached Rome. What a striking commentary we find in this simple fact upon the words of St. Paul in Galatians iv. 4: "When the fulness of the time came God sent forth His Son." Roman dominion involved much suffering and war and bloodshed, but it secured the network of communication, the internal peace, and the steady, regular government which now covered Europe as well as Asia, and thus for the first time in the world's history rendered the diffusion of the gospel possible, as St. Paul's example here shows. The voyage from Troas to Neapolis was taken by the Apostle after the usual fashion of the time.[1] Neapolis was the port of Philippi, whence it is distant some eight miles. Travellers from the East to Rome always landed there, and then took the Egnatian Road which started from Neapolis. If they were official persons they could use the public postal service, post-houses being established at a distance of six miles from one another, where relays of horses were kept at the public expense, to carry persons travelling on the imperial service.[2] Paul and Silas, Timothy and

[1] Both Lewin and Conybeare and Howson in their *Lives of St. Paul* enter into great details about the scenery and other circumstances of St. Paul's voyage from Troas to Neapolis, which would be out of place in this commentary, even if space did allow their insertion. Mr. Lewin's account is specially interesting, as he gives the impressions made upon himself when going over the ground. These writers all point out that St. Paul must have travelled with a fair wind; Conybeare and Howson even try to determine its exact direction, which they maintain was from the southward. Otherwise he could not have made the passage in two days, or followed the course actually taken. On a subsequent occasion (Acts xx. 6) St. Paul took five days in sailing from Philippi to Troas.

[2] Posts for the conveyance of intelligence were established by

Luke, must, however, have travelled on foot along the Egnatian Road from Neapolis to Philippi, which was their first objective point, according to St. Paul's usual policy, of attacking large and important centres of population, and then leaving the sacred leaven to work out into the surrounding mass of paganism. Philippi amply rewarded the wisdom of his plan, and the Philippian Church became notable for its zeal, its faith, its activity, among the Churches which owed their origin to the Apostle, as we learn from the Epistles addressed to the Corinthians and to the Philippians themselves a short time after the foundation of the Philippian Church.

Now let us look at the circumstances under which that foundation was laid. To understand them we must go back upon the course of history. Philippi was a city built by King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. After the conquest of Macedonia by the Romans, it became famous as the scene of the great battle between Brutus and Cassius on the one hand,

Augustus (see Suetonius, *Aug.*, 49). Gibbon, in the second chapter of his *History*, has much information on this point. The reader curious in such matters will find a learned account of the Roman postal service in Godefroy's *Commentary on the Theodosian Code*, vol. ii., p. 526, where he traces the system down from Augustus to the year 400 A.D. It was somewhat similar to that which now prevails in Russia. An interesting story is told concerning Constantine the Great, which illustrates the system. During the Diocletian persecution Constantine, whose leanings towards Christianity were suspected, was residing in Asia Minor with the Emperor Galerius, the determined enemy of Christianity. Constantine knew that there was a plot against him, so, having obtained the authority necessary to use the post, he fled secretly one night, and as he rode along took fresh horses, and at the same time brought the tired animals with him. When his enemies followed him next day, they found the post stables empty, and their prey escaped without any possibility of pursuit. See *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. i., p. 526, Art. Constantinus I., and De Broglie, *L'Église et L'Empire*, vol. i., p. 192.

and Mark Antony and Augustus on the other, which decided the fate of the empire and influenced the course of the world's history as few other battles have done. At the time of St. Paul's visit the memory of that battle was fresh, and the outward and visible signs thereof were to be seen on every side, as indeed some of them are still to be seen, the triumphal arches, for instance, erected in memory of the victory and the mound or rampart of earth raised by Brutus to hinder the advance of the opposing forces.[1] But these things had for the holy travellers a very slight interest, as their hearts were set upon a mightier conflict and a nobler war far than any ever before waged upon earth's surface. There is no mention made in the sacred narrative of the memories connected with the place, and yet St. Luke, as an honest writer setting down facts of which he had formed an important part, lets slip some expressions which involve and throw us back upon the history of the place for an explanation, showing how impossible it is to grasp the full force and meaning of the sacred writers unless we strive to read the Bible with the eyes of the people who lived at the time and for whom it was written. St. Luke calls Philippi "a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a colony." Now this means that in that time it was situated in the Roman province of Macedonia, that it was either the capital of the division of Macedonia, in which it was situated, Macedonia being subdivided into four distinct divisions which were kept perfectly separate, or else that it was the

[1] The remains of this rampart still exist. They are described in the *Mission Archéologique de Macédoine*, p. 103, carried out under the direction of M. Leon Heuzey, by order of Napoleon III., and published at Paris between 1864 and 1876.

first city the traveller met upon entering Macedonia from Asia, and further that it was a Roman colony, and thus possessed peculiar privileges. When we read in the Bible of colonies we must not understand the word in our modern sense. Colonies were then simply transcripts of the original city whence they had come. Roman colonies were miniatures or copies of Rome itself transplanted into the provinces, and ruling as such amid the conquered races where they were placed. They served a twofold purpose. They acted as garrisons to restrain the turbulence of the neighbouring tribes; and if we study Roman geography carefully we shall find that they were always placed in neighbourhoods where their military importance is plainly manifest; and further still, they were used as convenient places to locate the veteran soldiers of Italy who had served their time, where they were rewarded with grants of land, and were utilising at the same time the skill and experience in military matters which they had gained, for the general benefit of the State.

Augustus made Philippi into a colony, erecting a triumphal arch to celebrate his victory over Brutus, and placing there a large settlement of his veterans who secured for him this important outpost. The colonies which were thus dispersed along the military frontier, as we should put it in modern language, were specially privileged. All the settlers were Roman citizens, and the government of the colony was like that of the mother city itself, in the hands of two magistrates, called in Greek Strategoi, or in Latin Prætors,[1] who ruled

[1] The proper official title of the highest magistrates of a colony was Duumviri. The colonies where a Greek spirit prevailed did not like this title, and called themselves Prætors, or *Στρατηγοί*, as in the case of Philippi. In exact accordance with St. Luke's usage Cicero, a century

according to the laws of the Twelve Tables and after Roman methods, though perhaps all the neighbouring cities were still using their ancient laws and customs handed down from times long prior to the Roman Conquest. The details given us by St. Luke are in the strictest accordance in all these respects with the facts which we know independently concerning the history and political status of Philippi.

St. Paul and his companions arrived in Philippi in the early part of the week. He was by this time a thoroughly experienced traveller. Five years later, when writing his Second Epistle to Corinth, he tells us that he had been already three times shipwrecked; so that, unless peculiarly unfortunate, he must have already made extended and repeated sea voyages, though up to the present we have only heard of the journeys from Antioch to Cyprus, from Cyprus to Perga, and from Attaleia back to Antioch.[1] A two days' voyage across the fresh and rolling waters of the Mediterranean, following by a steep climb over the mountain Pangæus which intervenes between Philippi and its port Neapolis, made, however, a rest of a day or two very acceptable to the Apostle and his friends. St. Paul never expected too much from his own body, or from the bodies of his companions; and though he knew the work of a world's salvation was pressing, yet he could take

earlier, tells us in one of his Orations, speaking of the vanity of Capua, which was thoroughly Greek in spirit, and therefore very vain: "While in other colonies the magistrates are called Duumviri, these wish themselves to be styled Prætors," a weakness laughed at in Horace's *Satires*, lib. i., v. 34-6. Dion Chrysostom, a Greek rhetorician of St. Paul's day, mocks the Greeks for the same flashy spirit.

[1] See note on p. 201 above. Dr. Salmon points out in his *Introduction to N. T.*, p. 346, an interesting proof in this connexion that St. Luke had never seen St. Paul's Epistles.

and enjoy a well-earned holiday from time to time. There was nothing in St. Paul of that eternal fussiness which we at times see in people of strong imaginations but weak self-control, who, realising the awful amount of woe and wickedness in the world, can never be at rest even for a little. The men of God remained quiet therefore (ch. xvi. 12, 13) till the Sabbath Day, when, after their usual custom, they sought out in the early morning the Jewish place of worship, where St. Paul always first proclaimed the gospel. The Jewish colony resident at Philippi must have been a very small one. The Rabbinical rule was that where ten wise men existed there a synagogue might be established.[1] There cannot therefore have been ten learned, respectable, and substantial Jews in Philippi competent to act as a local sanhedrin or court. Where, however, the Jews could not establish a synagogue, they did not live without any external expression of religion. They knew how easily neglect of public worship is followed by practical atheism, as we often see. Men may say indeed that God can be realised, and can be worshipped anywhere,—a very great truth and a very precious one for those who are unavoidably cut off from the public worship of the Most High; but a truth which has no application to those who wilfully cut themselves off from that worship which has the covenanted promise of His presence. It is not a good sign for the young men of this generation that so many of them utterly neglect public worship; for as surely as men act so, then present neglect will be followed by a total forgetfulness of the Eternal, and

[1] See Dr. John Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ* on Matt. iv. 23; Works (London, 1684), vol. ii., pp. 132-34. for the Rabbinical legislation on Synagogues and their erection.

by a disregard of the laws which He has established amongst men. The Jews at Philippi did not follow this example; when they could not establish a synagogue they set apart an oratory or Place of Prayer, whither they resorted on the Sabbath Day to honour the God of their fathers, and to keep alive in their children's hearts the memory of His laws and doings.[1]

The original name of Philippi was Crenides, or Place of Streams.[2] Beside one of these streams the Jews had placed their oratory, and there St. Paul preached his first sermon in Europe and gained Lydia, his first European convert, a Jewess by blood, a woman of Thyatira in Asia Minor by birth, of Philippi in Macedonia by residence, and a dyer in purple by trade.[3]

[1] A local illustration of this typical Church history occurs to me. Oliver Cromwell planted Ireland, especially the golden vale of Tipperary, with his Puritan soldiers. They were strong Nonconformists, and refused therefore after the Restoration to worship according to the forms of the Established Church. Their children after a generation or two almost universally fell into the arms of the Church of Rome, and now many of the leading members of the National League are Roman Catholic descendants of Cromwell's Puritans, and display still the same vigorous qualities which adorned their Protestant ancestors in the copious abuse they pour upon the memory of the men from whom they are descended.

[2] I am here reminded of a place with exactly the same name which became as famous in the history of the Celtic Church as Philippi did in that of the Macedonian Church. Fore, in the county of Westmeath, means Place or Valley of Streams. It was celebrated in the seventh century as a great missionary establishment, at the head of which stood St. Fechin, a primitive Celtic missionary. His oratory, cell, and ancient church are still to be seen. I have described them in a paper contributed to the Journal of the Society of Irish Antiquaries for this year (1892). A comparison of St. Paul's missionary methods with those of St. Fechin would be interesting. They are fully described in Colgan's *Acts of the Irish Saints*.

[3] The guild of dyers at Thyatira is celebrated in the inscriptions belonging to that city found in Bœckh's *Corpus Inscriptionum Græcarum*.

The congregation of women assembled at that oratory must have been a very small one. When Philippi did not afford a sufficient Jewish population for the erection of a synagogue such as was found among the smaller towns of Asia Minor, and such as we shall in the course of the present tour find to have existed at towns and cities of no great size in Greece and Macedonia, then we may be sure that the female population, who assembled that Sabbath morning to pray and listen to the Scriptures, must have been a small one. But St. Paul and his companions had learned already one great secret of the true evangelist's life. They never despised a congregation because of its smallness. I have read somewhere in the writings of St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, a remark bearing on this point. De Sales was an extreme Roman Catholic, and his mind was injured and his mental views perverted in many respects by the peculiar training he thus received. But still he was in many respects a very saintly man, and his writings embody much that is good for every one. In one of his letters which I have read he deals with this very point, and speaks of the importance of small congregations, first, because they have no tendency to feed the preacher's pride, but rather help to keep him humble; and secondly, because some of the most effective and fruitful sermons have been preached to extremely small congregations, two or three persons at most, some one of whom has afterwards turned out to be a most vigorous soldier of the Cross of Christ. The most effective sermon perhaps that ever was preached was that delivered to Saul of Tarsus when to him alone came the voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And here again, in the Philippian Oratory, the congregation was but a small one, yet the Apostle

despised it not. He and his companions bent all their powers to the work, threw their whole hearts into it, and as the result the Lord rewarded their earnest, thorough, faithful service as He rewards such service in every department of life's action. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia so that she attended to the apostolic teaching, and she and all her household when duly instructed became baptized disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

This was an important incident in the history of the Philippian Church, and was attended by far-reaching results. Lydia herself, like so many others of God's most eminent saints, disappears at once and for ever from the scene. But her conversion was a fruitful one. St. Paul and his friends continued quietly but regularly working and teaching at the oratory. Lydia would seem to have been a widow, and must have been a woman of some position in the little community; for she was able to entertain the Apostle and his company as soon as she embraced the faith and felt its exceeding preciousness. When inviting them, too, she uses the language of a woman independent of all other control. "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there," are words with the tone of one who as a widow owned no superior, and whose will was law within her own household; as well as the language of a woman who felt that the gospel she had embraced demanded and deserved the consecration to its service of all her worldly possessions. Previously to this conversion St. Paul had lived in hired lodgings, but now he moved to Lydia's residence, abiding there, and thence regularly worshipping at the Jewish oratory. The presence of these Jewish strangers soon attracted attention. Their teaching too got noised abroad, exaggerated doubtless

and distorted after the manner of popular reports. And the crowd were ready to be suspicious of all Eastern foreigners. The settlers in the colony of Philippi belonged to the rural population of Italy, who, after the manner of countrified folk of every generation, were a good way behind, for good or ill, their city brethren. The excavations made at Philippi have brought to light the fact that the colonists there were worshippers of the primitive Italian rustic gods, specially of the god Silvanus, eschewing the fashionable Greek deities, Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Diana, Apollo, and such like. A temple of Silvanus was erected at Philippi for the hardy Italian veterans, and numerous inscriptions have been found and have been duly described by the French Mission in Macedonia to which we have already referred, telling of the building of the temple and of the persons who contributed towards it.[1] These simple Western soldiers were easily prejudiced against the Eastern strangers by reports spread concerning their doctrines, and specially

[1] See Leon Heuzey's *Mission Archéologique de Macedoine*, p. 71 (Paris, 1864-76). One tablet found furnishes a list of benefactions. One man gives a bronze statue of the deity, another helps to roof the building. Another tablet gives a list of the officials of the temple worship. Curiously enough among these officials occur names well known to us from St. Paul's Epistles, as Crescens, Secundus, Trophimus, Aristarchus, Pudens, Urbanus, and Clemens: cf. the Philippian inscriptions in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. iii., par. i., pp. 120-28. Among these rude Italian veterans, unspoilt by the glitter and vices of Greek idolatry and civilisation, the Cross may have found out many true soldiers of Jesus Christ: see Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 210. It is interesting to notice that a similar set of tablets commemorating the benefactors of the temple of Diana at Ephesus was discovered in the excavations made twenty years ago at that place. The inscriptions are translated in the Appendix to Wood's *Ephesus*.

concerning the Jewish King, of whose kingdom they were the heralds. Political considerations were at once raised. We can scarcely now realise the suspicions which must have been roused against the early preachers of Christianity by the very language they used. Their sacramental language concerning the body and blood of Christ, the language of Christian love and union which they used, designating themselves brethren and sisters, caused for more than two centuries the dissemination of the most frightful rumours concerning the horrible nature of Christian love-feasts. They were accused of cannibalism and of the most degraded and immoral practices; and when we take up the Apologists of the second century, Justin Martyr and such like, we shall find that the efforts of these men are largely directed to the refutation of such dreadful charges.[1] And as it was in morals so was it too in politics. The sacred and religious language of the Christians caused them to be suspected of designs hostile to the Roman Government. The apostles preached about a King who ruled the kingdom of God. Now the Romans abhorred the very name and title of king, which they associated with the cruel acts of the early tyrants who reigned in the times of Rome's fabulous antiquity. The hostility to the title was so great that, though the Roman people endured a despotism much worse and crushing at the hands of the Cæsars, they never would allow them to assume the title of kings, but simply called them emperors, imperators or commanders of the army, a name which

[1] See, for instance, Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, ch. xxix., *Second Apology*, ch. xii., and Athenagoras' *Apology*, chs. xxxi.-xxxv. These passages will be found in Justin Martyr and Athenagoras as translated in T. & T. Clark's Ante-Nicene Series, pp. 32, 81, 415-19.

to their ears connoted nothing savouring of the kingly office, though for moderns the title of emperor expresses the kingly office and much more. The colonists in Philippi, being Italians, would feel these prejudices in their full force. Easterns indeed would have had no objection to the title of king, as we see from the cry raised by the mob of Jerusalem when they cried in reference to Christ's claim, "We have no king but Cæsar." But the rough and rude Roman veterans, when they heard vague reports of St. Paul's teaching to the Jews who met at the oratory by the river-side, quite naturally mistook the nature of his doctrine, and thought that he was simply a political agitator organising a revolt against imperial authority.[1] An incident which then occurred fanned the slumbering embers into a flame. There was a female slave the property of some crafty men who by her means traded on the simplicity of the colonists. She was possessed with a spirit of divination. What the nature of this spirit was we have not the means of now determining. Some would resolve it into mere epilepsy, but such an explanation is not consistent with St. Paul's action and words. He addressed the spirit, "I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And the spirit, we are told, came out that very hour. The simple fact is that psychology is at the best a very obscure science,

[1] This political prejudice against Christianity lasted into the second century: see the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr, ch. xi.: "When you hear that we look for a kingdom, you suppose, without making any inquiry, that we speak of a human kingdom; whereas we speak of that which is with God, as appears also from the confession of their faith made by those who are charged with being Christians, though they know that death is the punishment awarded to him who so confesses", words which imply that in Justin's day many had been martyred on mere political accusations.

and the mysteries of the soul a very puzzling region, even under the Christian Dispensation and surrounded by the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of God. But paganism was the kingdom of Satan, where he ruled with a power and freedom he no longer enjoys, and we can form no conception of the frightful disturbances Satanic agency may have raised amid the dark places of the human spirit. Without attempting explanations therefore, which must be insufficient, I am content to accept the statement of the sacred writer, who was an eye-witness of the cure, that the spirit of divination, the spirit of Python, as the original puts it, yielded obedience to the invocation of the sacred Name which is above every name, leaving the damsel's inner nature once more calm and at union within itself. This was the signal for a riot. The slave owners recognised that their hopes of gain had fled. They were not willing to confess that these despised Jews possessed a power transcending far that which dwelt in the human instrument who had served their covetous purposes. They may have heard, it may be, of the tumults excited about this same time by the Jews at Rome and of their expulsion from the capital by the decree of the Emperor, so the owners of the slave-girl and the mob of the city dragged the Apostles before the local Duumvirs and accused them of like disturbances: "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, being Romans." The accusation was sufficient. No proof was demanded, no time for protest allowed. The magistrates with their own hands dragged the clothes off the backs of the Apostles, and they were flogged at once by the lictors or sergeants, as our translation calls them, in attendance upon the Duumvirs,

who then despatched their victims to the common prison. Here a question may be raised, Why did not St. Paul save himself by protesting that he was a Roman citizen, as he did subsequently at Jerusalem when he was about to be similarly treated? Several explanations occur. The colonists were Italians and spoke Latin. St. Paul spoke Hebrew and Greek, and though he may have known Latin too, his Latin may not have been understood by these rough Roman soldiers. The mob again was excited, and when a mob gets excited it is but very little its members attend to an unfortunate prisoner's words. We know too, not only from St. Paul's own words, but from the testimony of Cicero himself, in his celebrated oration against Verres, that in remote districts this claim was often disregarded, even when urged by Italians, and much more when made by despised Jews. St. Paul tells us in 2 Cor. xi. 25, that he received three Roman floggings notwithstanding his Roman citizenship, and though the Philippian magistrates were afraid when they heard next day of the illegal violence of which they had been guilty, the mob, who could not be held accountable, probably took right good care that St. Paul's protest never reached the official ears to which it was addressed. These considerations sufficiently account for the omission of any notice of a protest on the Apostle's part. He simply had not the opportunity, and then when the tumultuous scene was over Paul and Silas were hurried off to the common dungeon, where they were secured in the stocks and thrust into the innermost prison as notorious and scandalous offenders.

No ill-treatment could, however, destroy that secret source of joy and peace which St. Paul possessed in his loved Master's conscious presence. "I take pleasure

in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake," is his own triumphant expression when looking back a few years later over the way by which the Lord had led him, and therefore at midnight the astonished prisoners heard the inner dungeon ringing with unwonted songs of praise raised by the Jewish strangers. An earthquake, too, lent its terrors to the strange scene, shaking the prison to its foundations and loosing the staples to which the prisoners' chains were fastened. The jailor, roused from sleep, and seeing the prison doors opened wide, would have committed suicide were it not for Paul's restraining and authoritative voice; and then the astonished official, who must have heard the strange rumours to which the words of the demoniac alluded—"These men are the servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation"—rushed into the presence of the Apostles crying out in words which have ever since been famous, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" to which the equally famous answer was given, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." The jailor then took the Apostles, bathed their bruised bodies, set food before them, gathered his household to listen to the glad tidings, which they received so rapidly and grasped so thoroughly that they were at once baptized and enabled to rejoice with that deep spiritual joy which an experimental knowledge of God always confers. The jailor, feeling for the first time in his life the peace which passeth all understanding, realised the truth which St. Augustine afterwards embodied in the immortal words: "Thou, O God, hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."[1]

[1] Augustine's *Confessions*, i. 1.

Let us look for a little at the question of the jailor and the answer of the Apostle. They are words very often used, and very often misused. The jailor, when he rushed into St. Paul's presence crying out "What must I do to be saved?" was certainly not the type of a conscience-stricken sinner, convinced of his own sin and spiritual danger, as men sometimes regard him. He was simply in a state of fright and astonishment. He had heard that these Jewish prisoners committed to him were preaching about some salvation which they had to offer. The earthquake seemed to him the expression of some deity's wrath at their harsh treatment, and so in his terror he desires to know what he must do to be saved from this wrath. His words were notable, but they were not Christian words, for he had yet much to learn of the nature of sin and the nature of the salvation from it which the Apostles were preaching. The Philippian jailor was a specimen of those who are saved violently and by fear. Terror forced him into communion with the Apostles, broke down the barriers which hindered the approach of the Word, and then the power of the Holy Ghost, working through St. Paul, effected the remainder, opening his eyes to the true character of salvation and his own profound need of it. St. Paul's words have been misunderstood. I have heard them addressed to a Christian congregation and explained as meaning that the jailor had nothing to do but just realise Christ Jesus as his Saviour, whereupon he was perfect and complete so far as the spiritual life was concerned; and then they were applied to the congregation present as teaching that, as it was with the jailor, so was it with all Christians; they have simply to believe as he did, and then they have nothing more to do,—a kind of teaching which infallibly produces

antinomian results.[1] Such an explanation ignores the fact that there is a great difference between the jailor, who was not a Christian in any sense and knew nothing about Christ when he flung himself at St. Paul's feet, and a Christian congregation, who know about Christ and believe in Him. But this explanation is still more erroneous. It misrepresents what St. Paul meant and what his hearers understood him to mean. What did any ordinary Jew or any ordinary pagan with whom St. Paul came in contact understand him to mean when he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved"? They first had to ask him who Jesus Christ was, whence He had come, what He had taught, what were the obligations of His religion. St. Paul had to open out to them the nature of sin and salvation, and to explain the obligation and blessing of the sacrament of baptism as well as the necessity of bodily holiness and purity. The initial sacrament of baptism must have held a foremost place in that midnight colloquy or conference concerning Christian truth. St. Paul was not the man to perform a rite of which his converts understood nothing, and to which they could attach no meaning. "Believe on the Lord Jesus" involved repentance and contrition and submission to Christian truth, and these things involved the exposition of Christian truth, history, doctrines, and duties.

This text, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," is often quoted in one-sided and narrow teaching to show that man has nothing to do to be saved. Of course in one sense this is perfectly

[1] See more on this point in vol. i., pp. 134-37, where I have given conclusive proofs of the misuse of this text from the writers of the seventeenth century.

true. We can do nothing *meritoriously* towards salvation ; from first to last our salvation is all of God's free grace ; but then, viewing the matter from the human side, we have much to do to be saved. We have to repent, to seek God for ourselves, to realise Christ and His laws in our life, to seek after that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. There were two different types of men who at different times addressed practically the same inquiry to the Apostles. They were both outside the Church, and they were both seekers blindly after God. The Jews on the day of Pentecost said, "Brethren, what shall we do?" and Peter replied, "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Such was apostolic teaching to the Jews of Jerusalem. The jailer demanded, "What must I do to be saved?" and St. Paul replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." Such was apostolic teaching to an ignorant pagan at Philippi ; more concise than the Jerusalem answer, but meaning the same thing, and involving precisely the same doctrines in the hands of such a great master of the spiritual life as was the Apostle of the Gentiles.[1]

[1] Mr. Sadler, in his Commentary on the Acts, treating of this passage has a long explanation identical in meaning with that which we have above urged. He says, for instance, p. 314 : "This statement of the way of salvation is one of the most important in the New Testament. It contains the seed of the whole body of apostolic doctrine respecting salvation by Christ. When I say apostolic, I mean the doctrine of SS. Peter and John, as well as of St. Paul ; for all being full of the Holy Ghost preached the same. Few places have been more perverted in order to uphold a heresy which, if St. Paul had been alive now, he would have abhorred, and denounced as fatal to the whole revelation of the Son of God, and that is antimonianism. . . . The Philippian jailor to whom the words were first addressed had never in

The remainder of the story is soon told. When the morning came there came quiet reflection with it as far as the magistrates were concerned. They became conscious of their illegal conduct, and they sent their lictors to order the release of the Apostles. St. Paul now stood upon his rights. His protest had been disregarded by the mob. He now claimed his rights as a Roman citizen. "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned men, that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out." These are St. Paul's words, and they are brave, and at the same time wise words. They were brave words because it took a strong man to send back such an answer to magistrates who had treated him so outrageously only the day before. They were wise words, for they give us an apostle's interpretation of our Lord's language in the Sermon upon the Mount concerning the non-resistance of evil, and show us that in St. Paul's estimation Christ's law did not bind a man to tolerate foul injustice. Such toleration, in fact, is very wrong if it can be helped; because it is simply an encouragement to the wicked doers to treat others in the same scandalous manner. Toleration of outrage and injustice is

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all probability heard the name of Jesus Christ before. . . . 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ' then meant to him, 'Believe on Him whom we are now about to set forth to thee.' And they there and then began to set Him forth, for they spake unto him 'the word of the Lord.' . . . This word must have shown him how—on what principle—he could exercise faith in Him so as to be saved. But did they call on him in his then state to believe anything respecting the Church and the sacraments of Christ? Unquestionably; for St. Paul would certainly not baptize a man who was totally ignorant of the grace of union with Christ which he would receive, and the obligations to serve Christ which he would come under, by being baptized."

unfair and uncharitable towards others, if they can be lawfully redressed or at least apologised for. It is a Christian man's duty to bring public evil-doers and tyrants, instruments of unrighteousness like these Duumvirs of Philippi, to their senses, not for his own sake, but in order that he may prevent the exercise of similar cruelties against the weaker brethren. We may be sure that the spirited action of St. Paul, compelling these provincial magnates to humble themselves before the despised strangers, must have had a very wholesome effect in restraining them from similar violence during the rest of their term of office.

Such was St. Paul's stay at Philippi. It lasted a considerable time, and made its mark, as a flourishing Church was established there, to which he addressed an Epistle when he lay the first time a captive at Rome. This Epistle naturally forms a most interesting commentary on the notices of the Philippian visit in the Acts of the Apostles, a point which is worked out at large in Bishop Lightfoot's Commentary on Philippians and in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*. The careful student of Holy Writ will find that St. Paul's letter and St. Luke's narrative when compared illuminate one another in a wondrous manner. We cannot afford space to draw out this comparison in detail, and it is the less necessary to do so as Dr. Lightfoot's writings are so generally accessible. Let us, however, notice one point in this Epistle to the Philippians, which was written about the same time (a few months previously, in fact) as the Acts of the Apostles. It corroborates the Acts as to the circumstances under which the Church of Philippi was founded. St. Paul in the Epistle refers again and again to the persecutions and afflictions of the Philippian Church, and implies that he was a fellow-

sufferer with them.[1] St. Paul dwells on this in the beginning of the Epistle in words whose force cannot be understood unless we grasp this fact. In the sixth verse of the first chapter he expresses himself as, "Confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace." St. Paul speaks of the Philippians as personally acquainted with chains and sufferings and prison-houses for Christ's sake, and regards these things as a proof of God's grace vouchsafed not only to the Apostle, but also to the Philippians; for St. Paul was living at that high level when he could view bonds and trials and persecutions as marks of the Divine love. In the twenty-eighth verse of the same chapter he exhorts them to be in no wise "affrighted by the adversaries," and in the next two describes them as persons to whom "it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf: having the same conflict which ye *saw* in me, and now hear to be in me," words which can only refer to the violence and afflictions which they witnessed as practised against himself, and which they

[1] Bishop Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 57) says: "St. Paul's first visit to Philippi closed abruptly amid the storm of persecution. It was not to be expected that where the life of the teacher had been so seriously endangered, the scholars would escape all penalties. The Apostle left behind him a legacy of suffering to this newly born Church. This is not a mere conjecture; the affliction of the Macedonian Christians, and of the Philippians especially, are more than once mentioned in St. Paul's Epistles (cf. 1 Thess. ii. 2). If it was their privilege to believe in Christ, it was equally their privilege to suffer for Him."

were now themselves suffering in turn. While to complete St. Paul's references we notice that in an Epistle written some five years later than his first visit to Philippi he expressly refers to the persecutions which the Philippian Church in common with all the Macedonian Churches seems to have suffered from the very beginning. In 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, he writes: "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the Churches of Macedonia; how that *in much proof of affliction* the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Now all these passages put together confirm for us what the Acts expressly affirms, that from the very outset of their Christian career the Philippian Church had endured the greatest trials, and experienced a fellowship in the Apostle's sufferings. And surely we may see in the character of the Philippian Epistle something eminently characteristic of this experience! It has been remarked that the Philippian Epistle is the only Epistle addressed to a Church in which there is no trace of blame or reproof. Temptation and trial and chastisement had there worked their appointed purpose. The Philippian Church had been baptized in blood, and grounded in afflictions, and purified by the cleansing fires of persecution, and consequently the tried Church gathered itself closer to its Divine Lord, and was perfected above all others in His likeness, and profited above all others in the Divine life.[1]

After the terrible experience of Philippi Paul and

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, in his Commentary on Philippians, *l.c.*, dwells on this point: "The unwavering loyalty of his Philippian converts is the constant solace of the Apostle in his manifold trials, the one bright ray of happiness piercing the dark clouds which gather ever thicker about the

Silas passed on to other towns of the same province of Macedonia. The Apostle, however, when quitting Philippi to do the same evangelistic work, breaking up the ground in other towns after the manner of a pioneer, did not leave the Church of Philippi devoid of wisest pastoral care. It is most likely, as Dr. Lightfoot points out in the Introduction to his Commentary on Philippians, that St. Luke was left behind to consolidate the work which had been thus begun by such a noble company. Then Paul and Silas and Timotheus proceeded to Thessalonica, one hundred miles west, the capital of the province, where the proconsul resided, and where was a considerable Jewish population, as we see, not only from the fact that a synagogue is expressly said to have existed there, but also because the Jews were able to excite the city pagan mob against the Apostles and drag them before the local magistrates.[1] St. Paul at Philippi had for the first time experienced a purely pagan persecution. He had indeed previously suffered at the hands of the heathen at Lystra, but they were urged on by the Jews. At Philippi he gained

evening of his life. They are his 'joy and crown, his brethren beloved and eagerly desired.' From them alone he consents to receive alms for the relief of his personal wants. To them alone he writes in language unclouded by any shadow of displeasure or disappointment."

[1] Thessalonica is to this day the abode of a large Jewish population. Tozer, in his *Highlands of Turkey*, vol. i., p. 146, says: "Of the sixty thousand inhabitants of Salonica two-thirds are Jews, the rest being Turks and Greeks. . . . From early times the Hebrew race seem to have been attracted by the commercial advantages of Salonica. Thus when St. Paul preached there he found a considerable Jewish community. . . . A large number of the Salonica Jews are rich merchants, and a great part of the wealth of the place is in their hands." Mr. Lewin, in his *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 222, gives a table of the distances all along St. Paul's route.

his first glimpse of that long vista of purely Gentile persecution through which the Church had to pass till Christianity seated itself in the person of Constantine on the throne of the Cæsars. But as soon as he got to Thessalonica he again experienced the undying hostility of his Jewish fellow-countrymen using for their wicked purposes the baser portion of the city rabble.[1] St. Paul remained three weeks in Thessalonica teaching privately and publicly the gospel message, without experiencing any Jewish opposition. It is an interesting fact that to this day St. Paul's visit to Thessalonica is remembered, and in one of the local mosques, which was formerly the Church of Sancta Sophia, a marble pulpit is shown, said to have been the very one occupied by the Apostle, while in the surrounding plains trees and groves are pointed out as marking spots where he tarried for a time. The Jews were at last, however, roused to opposition, possibly because of St. Paul's success among the Gentiles, who received his doctrines with such avidity that there believed "of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." In Thessalonica, as elsewhere, the spirit of religious selfishness, desiring to have gospel promises and a Messiah all to themselves, was the ruin of the Jewish people. The Jews therefore, assisted by the pagans, assaulted the residence of Jason, with whom St. Paul and his friends were staying. They missed the Apostles themselves, but they seized Jason and some of the apostolic band, or at least some of their converts whom they found in Jason's house, and brought them before the town magistrates, who, acting

[1] Mr. Findlay, in a little work lately published, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle*, has many valuable observations on the subject of the Jewish opposition experienced by the Apostle at Thessalonica.

under the eye of the resident proconsul, did not lend themselves to any irregular proceedings like the Philippian prætors. A charge of treason was formally brought against the prisoners: "These all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus"; in the words of which charge we get a glimpse of the leading topic on which the Apostles insisted. Jesus Christ, the crucified, risen, glorified King and Head of His people, was the great subject of St. Paul's teaching as it struck the heathen. The Thessalonian magistrates acted very fairly. They entered the charge which was a serious one in the eye of Roman law. Bail was then taken for the accused and they were set free. The Apostles, however, escaped arrest, and the local brethren determined that they should incur no danger; so while the accused remained to stand their trial, Paul and Silas and Timotheus were despatched to Berœa, where they were for a time welcomed, and free discussion permitted in the synagogue concerning the truths taught by the Evangelists. After a time, however, tidings having reached Thessalonica, agents were despatched to Berœa, who stirring up the Jewish residents, St. Paul was despatched in charge of some trusty messengers who guided the steps of the hunted servant of God to the city of Athens. We see the physical infirmities of St. Paul, the difficulties he had to contend with, hinted at in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the seventeenth chapter. "Then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul," and "They that conducted Paul brought him to Athens," words which give us a glimpse of his fearfully defective eyesight. His enemies might be pressing upon him and danger might be imminent, but he could make no unaided effort to save himself. He depended upon the

kindly help of others that he might escape his untiring foes and find his way to a place of safety.

Thus ended St. Paul's first visit to Thessalonica so far as the Acts of the Apostles is concerned; but we have interesting light thrown upon it from an Epistle which St. Paul himself wrote to the Thessalonians soon after his departure from amongst them. A comparison of First Thessalonians with the text of the Acts will furnish the careful student with much information concerning the circumstances of that notable visit, just as we have seen that the text of the Philippian Epistle throws light upon his doings at Philippi. The Thessalonian Epistles are more helpful even than the Philippians in this respect, because they were written only a few months after St. Paul's visit to Thessalonica, while years elapsed, eight or ten at least, before the Philippian Epistle was indited. First Thessalonians shows us, for instance, that St. Paul's visit to Thessalonica lasted a considerable time. In the Acts we read of his discussing in the synagogue three Sabbath days, and then it would appear as if the riot was raised which drove him to Berœa and Athens. The impression left on our minds by St. Luke's narrative is that St. Paul's labours were almost entirely concentrated upon the Jews in Thessalonica, and that he bestowed very little attention indeed upon the pagans. The Epistle corrects this impression. When we read the first chapter of First Thessalonians we see that it was almost altogether a church of converted idolaters, not of converted Jews. St. Paul speaks of the Thessalonians as having turned from idols to serve the living God; he refers to the instructions on various points like the resurrection, the ascension, the second coming of Christ, which

he had imparted, and describes their faith and works as celebrated throughout all Macedonia and Achaia. A large and flourishing church like that, composed of former pagans, could not have been founded in the course of three weeks, during which time St. Paul's attention was principally bestowed on the Jewish residents. Then too, when we turn to Philippians iv. 16, we find that St. Paul stayed long enough in Thessalonica to receive no less than two remittances of money from the brethren at Philippi to sustain himself and his brethren. His whole attention too was not bestowed upon mission work; he spent his days and nights in manual labour. In the ninth verse of the second chapter of First Thessalonians he reminds them of the fact that he supported himself in their city, "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." When we realise these things we shall feel that the Apostle must have spent at least a couple of months in Thessalonica. It was perhaps his tremendous success among the heathen which so stirred up the passions of the town mob as enabled the Jews to instigate them to raise the riot, they themselves keeping all the while in the background. St. Paul, in First Thessalonians, describes the riots raised against the Christians as being the immediate work of the pagans: "Ye, brethren, became imitators of the Churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus. For ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen as they did of the Jews"; a statement which is quite consistent with the theory that the persecution was originally inspired by the Jews. But we cannot further pursue this interesting line of inquiry

which has been thoroughly worked out by Mr. Lewin in vol. ii., ch. xi., by Conybeare and Howson in ch. ix., and by Archdeacon Farrar, as well as by Dr. Salmon in his *Introduction to the New Testament,* ch. xx. The careful student will find in all these works most interesting light reflected back upon the Acts from the apostolic letters, and will see how thoroughly the Epistles, which were much the earlier documents, confirm the independent account of St. Luke, writing at a subsequent period.

Before we terminate this chapter we desire to call attention to one other point where the investigations of modern travel have helped to illustrate the genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles. It has been the contention of the rationalistic party that the Acts was a composition of the second century, worked up by a clever forger out of the materials at his command. There are various lines of proof by which this theory can be refuted, but none appeal so forcibly to ordinary men as the minute accuracy which marks it when describing the towns of Asia Minor and Macedonia. Macedonia is a notable case. We have already pointed out how the Acts give their proper title to the magistrates of Philippi and recognise its peculiar constitution as a colony. Thessalonica forms an interesting contrast to Philippi. Thessalonica was a free city, like Antioch in Syria, Tarsus, and Athens, and therefore, though the residence of the proconsul who ruled the province of Macedonia, was governed by its own ancient magistrates and its own ancient laws, without any interference on the part of the proconsul. St. Luke makes a marked distinction between Philippi and Thessalonica. At Philippi the Apostles were brought before the prætors, at Thessalonica they were brought

before the politarchs,[1] a title strange to classical antiquity, but which has been found upon a triumphal arch which existed till a few years ago across the main street of the modern city of Thessalonica. That arch has now disappeared; but the fragments containing the inscription were fortunately preserved and have been now placed in the British Museum, where they form a precious relic proving the genuineness of the sacred narrative.

[1] This case of Thessalonica is an interesting illustration of Bishop Lightfoot's statement:—"The government of the Roman provinces at this time was peculiarly dangerous ground for the romance-writer to venture upon" (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 291). If the Roman provinces were a dangerous ground for a romance-writer, such as some critics would make the author of the Acts, the government of the large Græco-Roman towns and cities was still more dangerous, as scarcely any two successive ones were alike. Thessalonica is a good instance of this. St. Luke calls the magistrates politarchs, and the triumphal arch at Thessalonica calls them politarchs; a title which seems to have been a very rare one, as only one other instance of its occurrence has been discovered. Monastir, in the north-west of Macedonia, is an important town, and there an inscription belonging to the ancient Deuriopus, twelve miles distant, was found more than twenty years ago containing the same title, politarchs. Surely the stones out of the walls of Thessalonica and of Monastir cry out in defence of St. Luke's accuracy! See Mr. Tozer's *Highlands of Turkey*, vol. i., p. 145, and vol. ii., p. 358, Append. B; Bœckh's *Corp. Ins. Græc.*, No. 1967; articles by the Abbé Belley in the *Acad. des Inscript.*, xxxviii., p. 125, and by Mr. Vaux in the *Trans. of Roy. Soc. of Literature*, vol. viii., new series.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. PAUL IN GREECE.

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with them that met with him. And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection." —Acts xvii. 16-18.

"After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth." —Acts xviii. 1.

THERE are parallelisms in history which are very striking, and yet these parallelisms can be easily explained. The stress and strain of difficulties acting upon large masses of men evolve and call forth similar types of character, and demand the exercise of similar powers. St. Paul and St. Athanasius are illustrations of this statement. They were both little men, both enthusiastic in their views, both pursued all their lives long with bitter hostility, and both had experience of the most marvellous and hairbreadth escapes. If any reader will take up Dean Stanley's *History of the Eastern Church*, and read the account given of St. Athanasius in the seventh chapter of that work, he will be strikingly reminded of St. Paul in these various aspects, but specially in the matter of his wondrous escapes from his deadly enemies, which were so numerous that at

last they came to regard Athanasius as a magician who eluded their designs by the help of his familiar spirits. It was much the same with St. Paul. Hairbreadth escapes were his daily experience, as he himself points out in the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to Corinth. He there enumerates a few of them, but quite omits his escapes from Jerusalem, from the Pisidian Antioch, from Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, and last of all from Berœa, whence he was driven by the renewed machinations of the Thessalonian Jews, who found out after a time whither the object of their hatred had fled. Paul's ministry at Berœa was not fruitless, short as it may have been. He established a Church there which took good care of the precious life entrusted to its keeping, and therefore as soon as the deputies of the Thessalonian synagogue came to Berœa and began to work upon the Jews of the local synagogue, as well as upon the pagan mob of the town, the Berœan disciples took Paul, who was the special object of Jewish hatred, and despatched him down to the sea-coast, some twenty miles distant, in charge of certain trusty messengers, while Silas remained behind, in temporary concealment doubtless, in order that he might consolidate the Church.[1] Here we get a hint, a passing glimpse of St. Paul's infirmity. He was despatched in charge of trusty messengers, I have said, who were to show him the way. "They that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens." His ophthalmia, perhaps, had become specially bad owing to the rough

[1] It is well, perhaps, to bear in mind the distances which separate the various stages of St. Paul's progress through Macedonia. Thessalonica was about a hundred miles from Philippi, Berœa fifty from Thessalonica, and the sea-coast of the Thermaic Gulf, or the Gulf of Salonica, as it is now called, some twenty miles from Berœa.

usage he had experienced, and so he could not escape all solitary and alone as he did in earlier years from Damascus, and therefore guides were necessary who should conduct him "as far as the sea," and then, when they had got that far, they did not leave him alone. They embarked in the ship with him, and, sailing to Athens, deposited him safely in a lodging. The journey was by sea, not by land, because a sea journey was necessarily much easier for the sickly and weary Apostle than the land route would have been, offering too a much surer escape from the dangers of pursuit.

The voyage was an easy one, and not too prolonged. The boat or ship in which the Apostle was embarked passed through splendid scenery. On his right hand, as he steered for the south, was the magnificent mountain of Olympus, the fabled abode of the gods, rising a clear ten thousand feet into the region of perpetual snow, while on his left was Mount Athos, upon which he had been looking ever since the day that he left Troas. But the Apostle had no eye for the scenery, nor had St. Luke a word to bestow upon its description, though he often passed through it, absorbed as they were in the contemplation of the awful realities of a world unseen. The sea voyage from the place where St. Paul embarked till he came to Phalerum, the port of Athens, where he landed, lasted perhaps three or four days, and covered about two hundred miles, being somewhat similar in distance, scenery, and surroundings to the voyage from Glasgow to Dublin or Bristol, land in both cases being in sight all the time and splendid mountain ranges bounding the views on either side.[1]

[1] The best description which I know of this neighbourhood is that given by Mr. Tozer in his *Highlands of Turkey*, vol. ii., p. 8. St. Paul embarked at the head of the long, narrow gulf, called anciently the

St. Paul landed about November 1st, 51, at Phalerum, one of the two ports of ancient Athens, the Piræus being the other, and thence his uncertain steps were guided to the city itself, where he was left alone in some lodging. The Berœan Christians to whom he was entrusted returned perhaps in the same vessel in which they had previously travelled, as the winter season, when navigation largely ceased, was now fast advancing, bearing with them a message to Timothy and Silas to come as rapidly as possible to his assistance, the Apostle being practically helpless when deprived of his trusted friends. At Athens St. Paul for a time moved about examining the city for himself, a process which soon roused him to action and brought matters to a crisis. St. Paul was well used to pagan towns and the sights with which they were filled. From his earliest youth in Tarsus idolatry and its abominations must have been a pain and grief to him; but Athens he found to exceed them all, so that "his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols." We have in ancient Greek literature the most interesting confirmation of the statement here made by St. Luke. We still possess a descriptive account of Greece written by a chatty Greek traveller named

Thermaic Gulf, leading up to the city of Thessalonica. The Apostle must have sailed in a mere fishing smack or good-sized boat, as the iron-bound western coast of this gulf is devoid of harbours sufficient for large ships. Mr. Tozer himself sailed from Thessalonica in such a vessel, see *l.c.*, vol. ii., p. 4: "We chartered a vessel to convey us down the bay, a six-oared Smyrna caïque, quite elegant in her appointments as compared with the ordinary lumbering market boats and coasters of these seas, and a tight little craft withal, for though not more than six feet in width, and without a deck, she had made a voyage to the Crimea during the war." Cicero, even when going as proconsul into Asia travelled in the "undecked vessel of the Rhodians," of whose weakness and slowness he complains: see his letters to Atticus, v. 12 and 13.

Pausanias, in the days of the Antonines, that is, less than a hundred years after St. Paul's visit, and when Athens was practically the same as in the Apostle's day. Pausanias enters into the greatest details about Athens, describing the statues of gods and heroes, the temples, the worship, the customs of the people, bestowing the first thirty chapters of his first book upon Athens alone. Pausanias's *Description of Greece*[1] is most interesting to every one because he saw Athens in the height of its literary glory and architectural splendour, and it is specially interesting to the Bible student because it amply confirms and illustrates the details of St. Paul's visit.

Thus we are told in words just quoted that St. Paul found "the city full of idols," and this provoked his spirit over and above the usual provocation he received wherever he found dead idols like these usurping the place rightfully belonging to the Lord of the universe. Now let us take up Pausanias, and what does he tell us? In his first chapter he tells how the ports of Athens were crowded on every side with temples, and adorned with statues of gold and silver. Phalerum, the port where Paul landed, had temples of Demeter, of Athene, of Zeus, and "altars of gods unknown," of which we shall presently speak. Then we can peruse chapter after chapter crowded with descriptions of statues and temples, till in the seventeenth chapter we read how in their pantheistic enthusiasm they idolised the most impalpable of things: "The Athenians have in the market-place, among other things not universally notable, an altar of Mercy, to whom, though

[1] This important work may be most easily consulted in Shilleto's translation, published in Bohn's Classical Library, Bell & Sons, London, 1886.

most useful of all the gods to the life of man and its vicissitudes, the Athenians alone of all the Greeks assign honours. And not only is philanthropy more regarded among them, but they also exhibit more piety to the gods than others; for they have also an altar to Shame and Rumour and Energy. And it is clear that those people who have a larger share of piety than others have also a larger share of good fortune." While again, in chapter xxiv., dwelling upon the statues of Hercules and Athene, Pausanias remarks, "I have said before that the Athenians, more than any other Greeks, have a zeal for religion." Athens was, at the time of St. Paul's visit, the leading university of the world, and university life then was permeated with the spirit of paganism, the lovers of philosophy and science delighting to adorn Athens with temples and statues and endowments as expressions of the gratitude they felt for the culture which they had there gained.[1] These things had, however, no charm for the Apostle Paul. Some moderns, viewing him from an unsympathetic point of view, would describe him in their peculiar language as a mere Philistine in spirit, unable to recognise the material beauty and glory which lay around. And this is true. The beauty which the architect and the sculptor would admire was for the Apostle to a large extent non-existent, owing to his defective eyesight; but even when recognised it was an object rather of dislike and of abhorrence than of admiration and pleasure, because

[1] The Emperor Hadrian, for instance, adorned Athens with expensive buildings and libraries, and enriched it with endowments. See Duhr's work, p. 44, on the *Journeys of the Emperor Hadrian*, published in the Proceedings of the Archæological Society of Vienna; and cf. Pausanias, i. 18.

the Apostle saw deeper than the man of mere superficial culture and æsthetic taste. The Apostle saw these idols and the temples consecrated to their use from the moral and spiritual standpoint, and viewed them therefore as the outward and visible signs of an inward festering corruption and rottenness, the more beautiful perhaps because of the more awful decay which lay beneath.

The glimpses which St. Paul got of Athens as he wandered about roused his spirit and quickened him to action. He followed his usual course therefore. He first sought his own countrymen the Jews. There was a colony of Jews at Athens, as we know from independent sources. Philo was a Jew the authenticity of whose writings, at least in great part, has never been questioned. He lived at Alexandria at this very period, and was sent, about twelve years earlier, as an ambassador to Rome to protest against the cruel persecutions to which the Alexandrian Jews had been subjected at the time when Caligula made the attempt to erect his statue at Jerusalem, of which we have spoken in a previous chapter. He wrote an account of his journey to Rome and his treatment by the Emperor, which is called *Legatio ad Caium*, and in it he mentions Athens as one of the cities where a considerable Jewish colony existed.[1] We know practically nothing more about

[1] Any one wishing to consult the writings of this contemporary of St. Paul can find Philo's works translated into English in 4 vols. in Bohn's Library of Ecclesiastical Antiquity. A comparison of St. Paul's writings with those of Philo will show us the wondrous superiority of those of the Christian Apostle, owing to his inspiration by the Holy Ghost. St. Paul's writings are a perpetual feast of fat things nourishing the soul unto everlasting life. The writings of Philo are curious and interesting, but no one would dream of taking them as a spiritual guide of life.

this Jewish colony save what we are told here by St. Luke, that it was large enough to have a synagogue, not a mere oratory like the Philippian Jews.[1] It cannot, however, have been a very large one. Athens was not a seat of any considerable trade, and therefore had no such attractions for the Jews as either Thessalonica or Corinth; while its abounding idolatry and its countless images would be repellant to their feelings. Modern investigations have, indeed, brought to light a few ancient inscriptions testifying to the presence of Jews at Athens in these earlier ages; but otherwise we know nothing about them. The synagogue seems to have imbibed a good deal of the same easy-going contemptuously tolerant spirit with which the whole atmosphere of Athens was infected. Jews and pagans alike listened to St. Paul, and then turned away to their own pursuits. In a city where every religion was represented, and every religion discussed and laughed at, how could any one be very much in earnest? St. Paul then turned from the Jews to the Gentiles. He frequented the market-place, a well-known spot, near to the favourite meeting-place of the Stoic philosophers.[2] There St. Paul entered into discussion with individuals or with groups as they presented themselves.

[1] The Athenians had for a long time previous to St. Paul's visit some commercial relations with the Jewish nation. Josephus, *Antiqq.*, XIV. 8, tells us how they erected a brass statue of the high priest Hyrcanus, as an expression of their good will to the Jewish nation. This was a hundred years before St. Paul's visit. Bayet discovered early Jewish inscriptions among the Athenian cemeteries. See his *De Titulis Atticæ Christianis*, pp. 122-24, of which we treat in a note *infra*.

[2] Pausanias, i. 15, gives a description of the Porch or Painted Chamber, the Stoa Pœcile, whence the Stoics derived their name, showing that it was close to the Agora, or market-place, where Paul disputed.

The philosophers soon took notice of the new-comer. His manner, terribly in earnest, would soon have secured attention in any society, and much more in Athens, where whole-souled and intense enthusiasm was the one intellectual quality which was completely wanting. For who but a man that had heard the voice of God and had seen the vision of the Almighty could be in earnest in a city where residents and strangers sojourning there all alike spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing? The philosophers and Stoics and Epicureans alike were attracted by St. Paul's manner. They listened to him as he discoursed of Jesus and the Resurrection, the two topics which absorbed him. They mistook his meaning in a manner very natural to the place, strange as it may seem to us. In Athens the popular worship was thoroughly Pantheistic. Every desire, passion, infirmity even of human nature was deified and adored, and therefore, as we have already pointed out, Pity and Shame and Energy and Rumour, the last indeed the most fitting and significant of them all for a people who simply lived to talk, found spirits willing to prostrate themselves in their service and altars dedicated to their honour. The philosophers heard this new Jewish teacher proclaiming the virtues and blessings of Jesus and the Resurrection, and they concluded Jesus to be one divinity and the Resurrection another divinity, lately imported from the mysterious East. The philosophers were the aristocracy of the Athenian city, reverenced as the University professors in a German or Scotch town, and they at once brought the new-comer before the court of Areopagus, the highest in Athens, charged, as in the time of Socrates, with the duty of supervising the affairs of the national

religion, and punishing all attacks and innovations thereon. The Apostle was led up the steps or stairs which still remain, the judges took their places on the rock-hewn benches, St. Paul was placed upon the defendant's stone, called, as Pausanias tells us, the Stone of Impudence, and then the trial began.

The Athenian philosophers were cultured, and they were polite. They demand, therefore, in bland tones, "May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know, therefore, what these things mean." And now St. Paul has got his chance of a listening audience. He has come across a new type of hearers, such as he has not enjoyed since those early days of his first Christian love, when, after his escape from Jerusalem, he resided at the university city of Tarsus for a long time, till sought out by Barnabas to come and minister to the crowds of Gentiles who were flocking into the Church at Antioch.[1] St. Paul knew right well the tenets of the two classes of men, the Stoics and the Epicureans, with whom he had to contend, and he deals with them effectually in the speech which he delivered before the court. Of that address we have only the barest outline. The report given in the Acts contains about two hundred and fifty words, and must have lasted little more than two minutes if that was all St. Paul said. It embodies, however, merely the leading arguments used by the Apostle as Timothy or some other disciple recollected them and told them to St. Luke. Let us see what

[1] That period of retirement at Tarsus may have been utilised by St. Paul in studying classical literature and Greek philosophy by way of preparation for that life's work among the Gentiles, to which he was appointed at his conversion.

these arguments were. He begins with a compliment to the Athenians. The Authorised, and even the Revised, Version represent him indeed as beginning like an unskilled and unwise speaker with giving his audience a slap in the face. "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious," would not have been the most conciliatory form of address to a keen-witted assembly like that before which he was now standing. It would have tended to set their backs up at once. If we study St. Paul's Epistles, specially his First Epistle to Corinth, we shall find that even when he had to find the most grievous faults with his disciples, he always began like a prudent man by conciliating their feelings, praising them for whatever he could find good or blessed in them. Surely if St. Paul acted thus with believers living unworthy of their heavenly calling, he would be still more careful not to offend men whom he wished to win over to Christ! St. Paul's exordium was complimentary rather than otherwise, bearing out the description which Pausanias gives of the Athenians of his own day, that "they have more than other Greeks, a zeal for religion." Let us expand his thoughts somewhat that we may grasp their force. "Men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are more religious and more devoted to the worship of the deity than other men. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God." St. Paul here displays his readiness as a practised orator. He shows his power and readiness to become all things to all men. He seizes upon the excessive devotion of the Athenians. He does not abuse them on account of it, he uses it rather as a good and useful foundation on which he may build a worthier

structure, as a good and sacred principle, hitherto misapplied, but henceforth to be dedicated to a nobler purpose. The circumstance upon which St. Paul seized, the existence of an altar dedicated to the unknown God, is amply confirmed by historic evidence. St. Paul may have noticed such altars as he passed up the road from Phalerum, where he landed, to the city of Athens, where, as we learn from Pausanias, the next-century traveller, such altars existed in his time; or he may have seen them on the very hill of Areopagus on which he was standing, where, from ancient times, as we learn from another writer, altars existed dedicated to the unknown gods who sent a plague upon Athens.[1] St. Paul's argument then was this. The Athenians were already worshippers of the Unknown God. This was the very deity he came proclaiming, and therefore he could not be a setter forth of strange gods nor liable to punishment in consequence. He then proceeds to declare more fully the nature of the Deity hitherto unknown. He was the God that made the world and all things therein. He was not identical therefore with the visible creation as the Pantheism of the Stoics declared,[2] but gave to all out of His own

[1] There are frequent notices of the altars to the unknown gods in ancient Greek writers: as in Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, vol. i., p. 2 (Shilleto's translation); *Life of Apollonius*, by Philostratus, vi., 3; Lucian's *Philopatris*, 29. See, however, for exhaustive discussions of this point, and the whole subject of the topography of ancient Athens, Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 242; Farrar's *St. Paul*, ch. xxvii., and Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*, vol. i., ch. x. Spon and Wheeler were travellers of the seventeenth century, whose works on this subject are important as showing Athens as it existed before modern changes. Some of the reports of travels in Greece, made by eminent scholars in the same century, and now very little known, may be found in the early volumes of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.

[2] St. Paul shows that he could sympathise with the true element in

immense fulness life and wealth, and all things; neither was He like the gods of the Epicureans who sat far aloof from all care and thought about this lower world. St. Paul taught God's personal existence as against the Stoics, and God's providence as against the Epicureans. Then he struck straight at the root of that national pride, that supreme contempt for the outside barbaric world, which existed as strongly among these cultured agnostic Greek philosophers as among the most narrow, fanatical, and bigoted Jews: "He made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." A doctrine which must have sounded exceeding strange to these Greeks accustomed to despise the barbarian world, looking down upon it from the height of their learning and civilisation, and regarding themselves as the only favourites of Heaven. St. Paul proclaims on the Hill of Mars Christian liberalism, the catholic and cosmopolitan character of the true religion in opposition to this Greek contempt grounded on mere human position and privilege, as clearly and as loudly as he proclaimed the same great truth at Jerusalem or in the synagogues of the Dispersion in opposition to Jewish exclusiveness grounded on the Divine covenant. St. Paul had grasped the great lesson taught by the prophets of the Old Testament as they prophesied concerning Babylon, Egypt, and Tyre. They proclaimed the lesson which Jewish ears were slow to learn, they taught the Jews the truth which Paul preached to the

pantheistic stoicism by his famous words which have a certain pantheistic ring, but still a very different one from that of the Stoics: "In Him we live and move and have our being."

philosophers of Athens, they acted upon the principle which it was the great work of Paul's life to exemplify, that God's care and love and providence are over all His works, that His mercies are not restrained to any one nation, but that, having made of one all nations upon the face of the earth, His blessings are bestowed upon them all alike. This truth here taught by St. Paul has been slow to make its way. Men have been slow to acknowledge the equality of all nations in God's sight, very slow to give up their own claims to exceptional treatment and blessing on the part of the Almighty. The great principle enunciated by the Apostle struck, for instance, at the evil of slavery, yet how slowly it made its way. Till thirty years ago really good and pious men saw nothing inconsistent with Christianity in negro slavery. Christian communions even were established grounded on this fundamental principle, the righteous character of slavery. John Newton was a slave trader, and seems to have seen nothing wrong in it. George Whitfield owned slaves, and bequeathed them as part of his property to be held for his Orphan House in America. But it is not only slavery that this great principle overthrows. It strikes down every form of injustice and wrong. God has made all men of one; they are all equally His care, and therefore every act of injustice is a violation of the Divine law which is thus expressed. Such ideas must have seemed exceedingly strange, and even unnatural to men accustomed to reverence the teaching and study the writings of guides like Aristotle, whose dogma was that slavery was based on the very constitution of nature itself which formed some men to rule and others to be slaves.

St. Paul does not finish with this. He has not yet

exhausted all his message. He had now dealt with the intellectual errors and mistakes of his hearers. He had around him and above him, if he could but see the magnificent figure of Athene, the pride and glory of the Acropolis, with its surrounding temples, the most striking proofs how their intellectual mistakes had led the wise of this world into fatal and degrading practices. In the course of his argument, having shown the nearness of God to man, "In Him we live and move and have our being," and the Divine desire that man should seek after and know God, he quoted a passage common to several well-known poets, "For we are also His offspring."[1] This was sufficient for St. Paul, who as we see, in all his Epistles, often flies off at a tangent when a word slips as it were by chance from his pen, leading him off to a new train of ideas. We are the offspring of God. How is it then that men can conceive the Godhead, that which is Divine, to be like unto those gold and silver, brass or marble statues, even though wrought with the greatest possible skill. The philosophers indeed pretended to distinguish between the Eternal Godhead and these divinities and images innumerable, which were but representa-

[1] These words are directly and literally taken out of the *Phænomena* of Aratus, a Greek poet of Cilicia and a fellow-countryman of the orator. He was absolutely correct, however, in saying "certain of your own poets," as the same sentiment is found in a hymn to Jupiter, composed by the Stoic philosopher and poet Cleanthes, a poem which will be found with a Latin version in Cudworth's *Intellectual System*. Cleanthes was the immediate successor of Zeno, the founder of Stoicism. His words therefore would have the more weight with his disciples three centuries later. He died, like a Stoic, of hunger, aged eighty, and a statue was erected to him by the Roman Senate in his native place Assos, a town of Æolis in Greece. See for more about Cleanthes and Aratus, Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*, or Smith's *Dict. Greek and Rom. Biog.*

tions of his several characteristics and attributes. But even if they distinguished intellectually, they did not distinguish in practice, and the people from the highest to the lowest identified the idol with the deity itself, and rendered thereto the honour due to God.[1]

St. Paul then proceeds to enunciate his own doctrines. He lightly touches upon, as he did previously at Lystra (ch. xiv. 16), a subject which neither the time at his disposal nor the position of his hearers would permit him to discuss. He glances at, but does not attempt to explain, why God had postponed to that late date this novel teaching: "The times of ignorance God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." This doctrine of repentance, involving a sense of sin and sorrow for it, must have sounded exceeding strange to those philosophic ears, as did the announcement with which the Apostle follows it up, the proclamation of a future judgment by a Man whom God had ordained for the purpose, and authenticated by raising him from the dead. Here the crowd interrupted him. The Resurrection, or Anastasis, which Paul preached was not then a new deity, but an impossible process through which no man save in fable had ever passed. When the Apostle got thus far the assembly broke up. The idea of a resurrection of a dead man was too much for them. It was too ludicrous for belief. "Some mocked: but others said, We will hear thee again of this matter," and thus ended St. Paul's address, and thus ended too the Athenian opportunity, for St. Paul soon passed away from such a

[1] As it was with the ancient image worshippers, so is it with the modern. The excuses made for the pagans in ancient times are exactly the same as those made for the image worshippers of the eighth and later centuries: see the article on Iconoclasm in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*

society of learned triflers and scoffers. They sat in the seat of the scorner, and the seat of the scorner is never a good one for a learner to occupy who wishes to profit. He felt that he had no great work to do in such a place. His opportunity lay where hearts were broken with sin and sorrow, where the burden of life weighed upon the soul, and men heavy laden and sore pressed were longing for real deliverance and for a higher, nobler life than the world could offer. His work, however, was not all in vain, nor were his personal discussions and his public address devoid of results. The Church of Athens was one of those which could look back to St. Paul as its founder. "Not many wise after the flesh were called" in that city of wisdom and beauty, but some were called, among whom was one of those very judges who sat to investigate the Apostle's teaching: "But certain clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." And this Church thus founded became famous; Dionysius the Areopagite became afterwards a celebrated man, because his name was attached some five centuries later to a notorious forgery which has played no small part in later Christian history.[1] Dionysius was

[1] Few biblical characters have been so surrounded with a haze of fable as Dionysius the Areopagite. All that we certainly know about him is from this passage in the Acts, and from two notices by Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 4, and iv. 23. In the *Acta Sanctorum* the Bollandists bestow an immense quantity of space on Dionysius and the literature of the subject under the date Oct. 9th, in their Fourth Volume for October, pp. 696-987. The name of Dionysius became specially celebrated when about the year 500 it was attached to an impudent forgery called the *Heavenly Hierarchy*, from which has been largely derived the modern Roman doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and which has also exercised a great influence on the development of modern pan-

the first bishop of the Athenian Church according to the testimony of another Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, who lived in the middle of the second century, while persons were yet living who could remember the Areopagite. He was succeeded by Publius, who presided over the Church at an important period of its existence. The Emperor Hadrian came to Athens, and was charmed with it about the year 125 A.D. At that time the Athenian Church must have included among its members several learned men; for the two earliest *Apologies* in defence of Christianity were produced by it. The Athenian Church had just then been purified by the fiery trials of persecution. Quadratus and Aristides stood forth to plead its cause before the Emperor.[1] Of Quadratus and his work we know but

theism: see the article on Dionysius in vol. i. of Smith's *Dict. Christ. Biog.* Johannes Scotus Erigena, an Irish scholar of the ninth century, was the only man in France found capable of translating these Greek works when brought to Western Europe from the East: see *Vett. Epistt. Hibernic. Sylloge*, xxii., xxiii., xxiv., in Ussher's Works (Ed. Elrington), iv. 474-87. Dionysius is commemorated on Oct. 3rd in the ancient Latin Martyrologies, on Oct. 9th in the modern Roman Martyrology. The ancient Martyrologies—the ancient Roman, Ado's, Usaurd's—have a curious notice stating that Aristides the Athenian, in a work which he wrote about the Christian religion, described the martyrdom of Dionysius in the reign of Hadrian. There is no notice of this in the *Apology* of Aristides which has lately come to light. A curious story is told in one of his alleged letters, addressed to Polycarp. Apollophanes, a pagan sophist, was attacking Polycarp about Christianity. Dionysius tells Polycarp to remind his opponent of the miraculous darkness on the day of Crucifixion which Dionysius and Apollophanes had seen at Hierapolis, where they were then both students, when Dionysius said, "Either the God of nature suffers, or the world is in process of dissolution."

[1] The visits of the Emperor Hadrian to Athens, and his delight in that city, have been confirmed by the latest antiquarian investigations in the region of coins and inscriptions. The student who wishes to make acquaintance with the evidence on this point, which has an important

little. Eusebius, the great Church historian, had, however, seen it, and gives us (*H. E.*, iv. 3) a brief abstract of it, appealing to the miracles of our Saviour, and stating that some of the dead whom Christ had raised had lived to his own time. While as for Aristides, the other apologist, his work, after lying hidden from the sight of Christendom, was printed and published last year, as we have told in the former volume of this commentary. That *Apology* of Aristides has much important teaching for us, as we have there tried to show There is one point, however, to which we did not allude. The *Apology* of Aristides shows us that the Athenian Church accepted in the fullest degree and preserved the great Pauline doctrine of the freedom and catholic nature of Christianity. In the year 125 Judaism and Christianity were still struggling together within the Church in other places; but at Athens they had clean separated the one from the other. Till that year no one but a circumcised Jewish Christian had ever presided over the Mother Church of Jerusalem, which sixty years after the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul preserved exactly the same attitude as in the days

bearing upon the historic proof of our holy religion, should consult the learned treatise of Julius Dürr, styled, *Die Reisen der Kaisers Hadrian*, (Vienna, 1881). It minutely investigates the records of Hadrian's life, and shows us that Hadrian visited and lived at Athens in A.D. 125. This work was published ten years before the *Apology* of the Athenian Christian Aristides was discovered, serving to illustrate its history from an independent point of view. I have endeavoured to set forth the bearing of this point at greater length than I can now bestow upon it in a series of papers on the *Apology* of Aristides in the *Sunday a Home* for 1891-2. Mrs. Rendal Harris, the wife of the discoverer of it, has published an interesting work on this *Apology*, to which I would refer the reader (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1892). The *Apology* itself was published in 1891, in the series called *Cambridge Texts and Studies.*

of James the Just.[1] The Church of Athens, on the other hand, as a thoroughly Gentile Church, had from the first enjoyed the ministry of Dionysius the Areopagite, a Gentile of culture and education. He had been attracted by the broad liberal teaching of the Apostle in his address upon Mars' Hill, enunciating a religion free from all narrow national limitations. He embraced this catholic teaching with his whole heart, and transmitted it to his successors, so that when some seventy years later a learned Athenian stood forth in the person of Aristides, to explain the doctrines of the Church, contrasting them with the errors and mistakes of all other nations, Aristides does not spare even the Jews. He praises them indeed when compared with the pagans, who had erred on the primary questions of morals; but he blames them because they had not reached the final and absolute position occupied by the Christians. Listen to the words of Aristides which proclaim the true Pauline doctrine taught in St. Paul's sermons, re-echoed by the Epistles, "Nevertheless the Jews too have gone astray from accurate knowledge, and they suppose in their minds that they are serving God, but in the methods of their service, their service is to angels and not to God, in that they observe Sabbaths and new moons, and the passover, and the great fast, and the fast and circumcision, and cleanness of meats," words which sound exactly the same note and embody the same conception as St. Paul in his indignant language to

[1] The testimony of Eusebius, *H. E.*, iv. 5, is express on this point: "Down to the siege of the Jews under Hadrian there were fifteen bishops in the Church of Jerusalem, all of whom, as they say, were Hebrews from the first, and received the genuine knowledge of Christ, so that in the estimation of those able to judge they were counted worthy of the episcopal office."

the Galatians (iv. 9-11): "Now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain."[1]

St. Paul did not stay long at Athens. Five or six weeks perhaps, two months at most, was probably the length of his visit, time enough just for his Berœan guides to go back to their own city two hundred miles away, and forward their message to Thessalonica fifty miles distant, desiring Timothy and Silas to come to him. Timothy, doubtless, soon started upon his way, tarried with the Apostle for a little, and then returned to Thessalonica, as we learn from 1 Thess. iii. 1: "When we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone, and sent Timothy to establish you and comfort you." And now he was again all alone in that scoffing city where neither the religious, moral, nor intellectual atmosphere could have been pleasing to a man like St. Paul. He quitted Athens therefore and came to Corinth. In that city he laboured for a period of a year and a half at least; and yet the record of his brief visit to Athens, unsuccessful as it was so far as immediate results are concerned, is

[1] The whole subject of the origin and history of the primitive Church of Athens has been minutely investigated by a modern French scholar, C. Bayet, a member of the French school of antiquaries at Athens. The title of his book, to which I have already referred, is *De Titulis Atticæ Christianis Antiquissimis Commentatio* (Thorin: Paris, 1878). He gives a large number of primitive Christian and Jewish inscriptions found at Athens. The above quotation from Aristides will be found in Rendal Harris's edition, p. 48, in the Cambridge *Texts and Studies*.

much longer than the record of his prolonged work in Corinth.

Now if we were writing a life of St. Paul instead of a commentary on the history told us in the Acts, we should be able to supplement the brief narrative of the historical book with the ample details contained in the Epistles of St. Paul, especially the two Epistles written to Corinth itself, which illustrate the life of the Apostle, his work at Corinth, and the state of the Corinthians themselves prior and subsequent to their conversion. A consideration of these points would, however, lead me to intrude on the sphere of the commentator on the Corinthian Epistles, and demand an amount of space which we cannot afford. In addition, the three great biographies of St. Paul to which we have so often referred—Lewin's, Farrar's, and that of Conybeare and Howson—treat this subject at such great length and with such a profusion of archæological learning as practically leave a fresh writer nothing new to say in this direction. Let us, however, look briefly at the record in the Acts of St. Paul's work in Corinth, viewing it from the expositor's point of view. St. Paul went from Athens to Corinth discouraged, it may have been, by the results of his Athenian labours. Opposition never frightened St. Paul; but learned carelessness, haughty contemptuous indifference to his Divine message, the outcome of a spirit devoid of any true spiritual life, quenched his ardour, chilled his enthusiasm. He must indeed have been sorely repelled by Athens when he set out all alone for the great capital of Achaia, the wicked, immoral, debased city of Corinth. When he came thither he united himself with Aquila, a Jew of Pontus, and Priscilla his wife, because they were members of the same craft. They had been lately expelled from Rome, and, like the Apostle, were tent-

makers: for convenience' sake therefore, and to save expense, they all lodged together.[1] Here again St. Paul experienced the wisdom of his father's training and of the Rabbinical law, which thus made him in Corinth, as before in Thessalonica, thoroughly independent of all external circumstances, and able with his own hands to minister to his body's wants. And it was a fortunate thing too for the gospel's sake that he was able to do so. St. Paul never permits any one to think for a moment that the claim of Christ's ministry for a fitting support is a doubtful one. He expressly teaches again and again, as in 1 Cor. ix., that it is the Scriptural as well as rational duty of the people to contribute according to their means to the maintenance of Christ's public ministry. But there were certain circumstances at Thessalonica, and above all at Corinth, which made St. Paul waive his just claim and even cramp, limit, and confine his exertions, by imposing on himself the work of earning his daily food. Thessalonica and Corinth had immense Jewish populations. The Jews were notorious in that age as furnishing the greatest number of impostors, quack magicians and every other kind of agency which traded upon human credulity for the

[1] This expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius, which in the providence of God brought Aquila and Priscilla into contact with St. Paul, is mentioned by the Roman historian Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25, in the following suggestive words: "He expelled the Jews who were continually creating tumults, Chestus impelling them." The tumults roused by the teaching of Christian doctrine, like those in the Thessalonian and Berœan synagogues, were evidently the origin of the edict. Aquila and Priscilla were constant travellers, and seem to have been influential Christians. We find them afterwards at Ephesus, where they tarried some time: see Acts xviii. 18, 19, 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; and subsequently 2 Tim. iv. 19. They also lived at Rome for a period between their two residences at Ephesus, as we learn from the fact that St. Paul sends a salutation to them in Romans xvi. 3, 4.

purposes of gain. St. Paul was determined that neither Jew nor Gentile in either place should be able to hinder the work of the gospel by accusing him of self-seeking or covetous purposes. For this purpose he united with Aquila and Priscilla in working at their common trade as tentmakers, employing the Sabbath days in debating after his usual fashion in the Jewish synagogues; and upon ordinary days improving the hours during which his hands laboured upon the coarse hair cloth of which tents were made, either in expounding to his fellow-workmen the glorious news which he proclaimed or else in meditating upon the trials of his converts in Macedonia, or perhaps, most of all, in that perpetual communion with God, that never-ceasing intercession for which he ever found room and time in the secret chambers of the soul. St. Paul's intercessions as we read of them in his Epistles were immense. Intercessory prayers for his individual converts are frequently mentioned by him. It would have been impossible for a man so hard pressed with labours of every kind temporal and spiritual to find place for them all in formal prayers if St. Paul did not cultivate the habit of ceaseless communion with his Father in heaven, perpetually bringing before God those cases and persons which lay dearest to his heart. This habit of secret prayer must be the explanation of St. Paul's widespread intercessions, and for this reason. He commends the same practice again and again to his converts. "Pray without ceasing" is his language to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. v. 17). Now this could not mean, prolong your private devotions to an inordinate length, because great numbers of his converts were slaves who were not masters of their time. But it does mean cultivate a perpetual sense of God's presence and of your own

communion with Him, which will turn life and its busiest work into a season of refreshing prayer and untiring intercession.

Meanwhile, according to Acts xviii. 5, Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, bringing contributions for the Apostle's support, which enabled him to fling himself entirely into ministerial and evangelistic work. This renewed activity soon told. St. Paul had no longer to complain of contemptuous or listless conduct, as at Athens. He experienced at Jewish hands in Corinth exactly the same treatment as at Thessalonica and Berœa. Paul preached that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews blasphemed Him, and called Him accursed. Their attitude became so threatening that Paul was at length compelled to retire from the synagogue, and, separating his disciples, Jews and Gentiles alike, he withdrew to the house of one Justus, a man whose Latin name bespeaks his Western origin, who lived next door to the synagogue. Thenceforth he threw himself with all his energy into his work. God too directly encouraged him. The very proximity of the Christian Church to the Jewish Synagogue constituted a special danger to himself personally when he had to deal with fanatical Jews. A heavenly visitor appeared, therefore, to refresh the wearied saint. In his hour of danger and of weakness God's strength and grace were perfected, and assurance was granted that the Lord had much people in the city of Corinth, and that no harm should happen to him while striving to seek out and gather God's sheep that were scattered abroad in the midst of the naughty world of Corinthian life. And the secret vision did not stand alone. External circumstances lent their assistance and support. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family became converts,

and were baptized. Gaius and Stephanas were important converts gathered from amongst the Gentiles; so important indeed were these three individuals and their families that St. Paul turned aside from his purely evangelistic and missionary labours and devoted himself to the pastoral work of preparing them for baptism administering personally that holy sacrament, a duty which he usually left to his assistants, who were not so well qualified for the rough pioneer efforts of controversy, which he had marked out for himself.[1] And so the work went on for a year and a half, till the Jews thought they saw their opportunity for crushing the audacious apostate who was thus making havoc even among the officials of their own organisation, inducing them to join his Nazarene synagogue.[2] Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital, was a Roman province, embracing, broadly speaking, the territory comprised in the modern kingdom of Greece. Like a great many other

[1] See 1 Cor. i. 14-17: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." I have often heard a very wrong conclusion drawn from this passage. People think that St. Paul was here casting a certain slight upon baptism as contrasted with preaching. His meaning, however, is evident to any one who will realise the circumstances. The Corinthians were breaking up into sects, calling themselves by the names of various Christian leaders. St. Paul thanks God that very few can call themselves by his name, as they had not even the poor excuse for doing so, which his officiating at their baptism might give. To him, in God's providence, had been assigned the rough, dangerous pioneer work of preaching to the adversaries, Jews and pagans, outside the Church; to others the work of introducing the converts made by him into the Mystical Body of Christ.

[2] In vol. i., p. 270, I have pointed out that in Corinth the Christians probably adopted, not only the name, but the organisation of the synagogues.

provinces, and specially like Cyprus, to which we have already called attention, Achaia was at times an imperial, at times a senatorial province. Forty years earlier it was an imperial province. The Acts describes it as just then, that is, about A.D. 53, a senatorial or proconsular province; and Suetonius, an independent Roman historian, confirms this, telling us (*Claud.*, 25) that the Emperor Claudius restored it to the senate.

Gallio, a brother of the celebrated philosophic writer Seneca, had been sent to it as proconsul, and the Jews thought they now saw their opportunity. Gallio, whose original and proper name was Annæus Novatus, was a man distinguished by what in Rome was considered his sweet, gentle, and loving disposition. His reputation may have preceded him, and the Jews of Corinth may have thought that they would play upon his easy-going temper. The Jews, being a very numerous community at Corinth, had it of course in their power to prove very unpleasant to any ruler, and specially to one of Gallio's reputed temper.[1] The Roman governors were invested with tremendous powers; they were absolute despots, in fact, for the time being, and yet they were often very anxious to gain popularity, especially with any troublesome body of their temporary subjects. The Roman proconsuls, in fact, adopted a principle we sometimes see still acted out in political life, as if it were the highest type of statesmanship. They were anxious to gain popularity by gratifying those who made themselves specially obnoxious and raised the loudest cries. They petted the naughty, and they neglected the good. So it was with Pontius Pilate, who perpetrated

[1] Cicero, in his oration Pro Flacco, ch. xxviii., shows how troublesome and dangerous, even to the very highest persons, the Jews at Rome could be one hundred years earlier than Gallio's day.

a judicial murder because it contented the multitude; so it was with Festus, who left an innocent man in bonds at Cæsarea because he desired to gain favour with the Jews; and so too, thought the Jews of Corinth, it would be with Gallio. They arrested the Apostle, therefore, using the messengers of the synagogue for the purpose, and brought him to the proconsular court, where they set him before the bema, or elevated platform, whence the Roman magistrates dispensed justice. Then they laid their formal accusation against him: "This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law"; expecting perhaps that he would be remitted by the proconsul to the judgment and discipline of their own domestic tribunal, even as Pilate said to the Jews about our Lord and their accusation against Him: "Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law." But the philosophic brother of the Stoic Seneca had a profound contempt for these agitating Jews. His Stoic education too had trained him to allow external things as little influence upon the mind as possible. The philosophic apathy which the Stoics cultivated must have more or less affected his whole nature, as he soon showed the Jews; for before the Apostle had time to reply to the charge Gallio burst in contemptuously. If it were a matter of law and order, he declares, it would be right to attend to it; but if your complaint is touching your own national law and customs I will have nothing to say to it. And then he commanded his lictors to clear the court. Thus ended the attempt on St. Paul's freedom or life, an attempt which was indeed more disastrous to the Jews themselves than to any one else; for the Gentile mob of Corinth, hating the Jews, and glad to see them baulked of their expected prey, seized the chief accuser

Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat; while Gallio all the while cared for none of these things, despising the mob, Jew and Gentile alike, and contemptuously pitying them from the height of his philosophic self-contentment. Gallio has been at all times regarded as the type of the mere worldling, who, wrapped in material interests, cares for nothing higher or nobler. But this is scarcely fair to Gallio. The Stoic philosopher was not dead to better things. But he is the type rather of men who, blinded by lower truths and mere intellectual wisdom, are thereby rendered careless of those spiritual matters in which the soul's true life alone consists. He had so thoroughly cultivated a philosophic contempt for the outside world and its business, the sayings and doings, the joys and the sorrows of the puny mortals who fume and strut and fret their lives away upon this earthly stage, that he lost the opportunity of hearing from the Apostle's lips of a grander philosophy, a deeper contentment, of a truer, more satisfying peace than was ever dreamt of in stoical speculation. And this type of man is not extinct. Philosophy, science, art, literature, politics, they are all great facts, all offer vast fields for human activity, and all may serve for a time so thoroughly to content and satisfy man's inner being as to render him careless of that life in Christ which alone abideth for evermore.

The attempt of the Jews marked the termination of St. Paul's work in Corinth. It was at least the beginning of the end. He had now laboured longer in Corinth than anywhere else since he started out from Antioch. He had organised and consolidated the Church, as we can see from his Corinthian Epistles and now he longed once more to visit his old friends,

and report what God had wrought by his means during his long absence. He tarried, therefore, yet a while, visiting doubtless the various Churches which he had established throughout all the province of Achaia, and then, accompanied by a few companions, set sail for Syria, to declare the results of his eventful mission, taking Ephesus on his way. This was his first visit to that great city, and he was probably led to pay it owing to the commercial necessities of Aquila. Life's actions and deeds, even in the case of an apostle, are moulded by very little things. A glance, a chance word, a passing courtesy, forgotten as soon as done, and life is very different from what it otherwise would have been. And so, too, the tent-making and tent-selling of Aquila brought Paul to Ephesus, shaped the remainder of his career, and endowed the Church with the rich spiritual heritage of the teaching imparted to the Ephesian disciples by word and epistle.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EPHESIAN CHURCH AND ITS FOUNDATION

"Paul, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, came to Ephesus, and he left them here: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you, if God will, he set sail from Ephesus. . . . Now a certain man named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully."—ACTS xviii. 19-21, 24-26.

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus."—ACTS xix. 1.

EPHESUS has been from very ancient times a distinguished city. It was famous in the religious history of Asia Minor in times long prior to the Christian Era. It was celebrated at the time of the Roman Empire as the chief seat of the worship of Diana and of the magical practices associated with that worship; and Ephesus became more celebrated still in Christian times as the city where one of the great Œcumenical Councils was held which served to determine the expression of the Church's faith in her Divine Lord and Master. It must then be of great interest to the

Christian student to note the first beginnings of such a vast transformation as that whereby a chief seat of pagan idolatry was turned into a special stronghold of Christian orthodoxy. Let us then devote this chapter to tracing the upgrowth of the Ephesian Church, and to noting the lessons the modern Church may derive therefrom.

St. Paul terminated his work in Corinth some time about the middle or towards the close of the year 53 A.D. In the early summer of that year Gallio came as proconsul to Achaia, and the Jewish riot was raised. After a due interval, to show that he was not driven out by Jewish machinations, St. Paul determined to return once more to Jerusalem and Antioch, which he had left some four years at least before. He went down therefore to Cenchreæ, the port of departure for passengers going from Corinth to Ephesus, Asia Minor, and Syria. A Christian Church had been established there by the exertions of St. Paul or some of his Corinthian disciples. As soon as an early Christian was turned from sin to righteousness, from the adoration of idols to the worship of the true God, he began to try and do something for Him whose love and grace he had experienced. It was no wonder that the Church then spread rapidly when all its individual members were instinct with life, and every one considered himself personally responsible to labour diligently for God. The Church of Cenchreæ was elaborately organised. It had not only its deacons, it had also its deaconesses, one of whom, Phœbe, was specially kind and useful to St. Paul upon his visits to that busy seaport, and is by him commended to the help and care of the Roman Church (Rom. xvi. 1, 2).

From Cenchreæ St. Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla sailed

for Ephesus, where, as we have already hinted, it is most likely the latter pair had some special business avocations which led them to stay at that city. They may have been large manufacturers of tents, and have had a branch establishment at Ephesus, which was then a great mercantile emporium for that part of Asia Minor.

An incidental remark of the sacred writer "having shorn his head in Cenchreæ, for he had a vow," has raised a controverted question. Some refer this expression to Aquila, and I think with much the greater probability. It was customary with the Jews at that time when in any special danger to take a temporary Nazarite vow, binding themselves to abstain from wine and from cutting their hair till a certain definite period had elapsed. Then when the fixed date had arrived, the hair was cut off and preserved till it could be burned in the fire of a sacrifice offered up at Jerusalem upon the individual's next visit to the Holy City. The grammatical order of the words naturally refer to Aquila as the maker of this vow; but I cannot agree in one reason urged for this latter theory. Some have argued that it was impossible for Paul to have made this vow; that it would, in fact, have been a return to the bondage of Judaism, which would have been utterly inconsistent on his part. People who argue thus do not understand St. Paul's position with respect to Jewish rites as being things utterly unimportant, and, as such, things which a wise born Jew would do well to observe in order to please his countrymen. If St. Paul made a vow at Corinth it would have been simply an illustration of his own principle, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order that I might gain the Jews." But further, I must say that the taking of a vow, though derived from Judaism, need not have

necessarily appeared to St. Paul and the men of his time a purely Jewish ceremony. Vows, in fact, naturally passed over from Judaism to Christianity.[1] Vows, indeed, of this peculiar character, and with this peculiar external sign of long hair, are no longer customary amongst Christians; but surely special vows cannot be said to have gone out of fashion, when we consider the wide spread of the teetotal movement, with its vows identical in one important element with that of the Nazarites! But viewing the matter from a still wider standpoint, people, when contending thus, forget what a large part the tradition of ancient customs must have played in the life, manners, and customs of St. Paul. All his early life he was a strict Pharisaic Jew, and down to the end of life his early training must have largely modified his habits. To take but one instance, pork was the common and favourite food of the Romans at this period. Now I am sure that St. Paul would have vigorously resisted all attempts to prevent the Gentile Christians eating bacon or ham; but I should not be in the least surprised if St. Paul, trained in Pharisaic habits, never once touched a food he had been taught to abhor from his earliest youth. Life is a continuous thing, and the memories of the past are very powerful. We can to this day trace among ourselves

[1] Jeremy Taylor, in his *Holy Living*, in his chapter on Prayer, has some wise remarks on vows. He includes them under the head of Prayer: "A vow to God is an act of prayer and a great degree and instance of opportunity, and an increase of duty by some new uncommanded instance, or some more eminent degree of duty or frequency of action, or earnestness of spirit in the same. And because it hath pleased God in all ages of the world to admit of intercourse with His servants in the matter of vows, it is not ill advice that we make vows to God in those cases in which we have great need or great danger." He then proceeds to lay down rules and cautions for making vows.

many customs and traditions dating back to the times antecedent to the Reformation, and much farther. The fires still lighted on St. John's Eve throughout Ireland, and once customary in Scotland, are survivals of the times of Druidical paganism in these islands. The ceremonies and social customs of Shrove Tuesday and Hallow E'en are survivals of the rude mirth of our pre-Reformation forefathers, on the nights before a celebrated fast, Ash Wednesday, in one case, before a celebrated feast, All Saints' Day, in the other. Or perhaps I may take another instance more closely analogous still which every reader can verify for himself. The use of the Church of England has to this day a curious instance of the power of tradition as opposed to written law. There is a general rubric placed in the Book of Common Prayer before the first Lord's Prayer. It runs as follows: "Then the minister shall kneel and say the Lord's Prayer with an audible voice; the people also kneeling and repeating it with him, both here, and wheresoever else it is used in Divine Service." This rubric plainly prescribes that clergy and people shall always say the Lord's Prayer conjointly. And yet, let my readers go into any church of the Anglican Communion on Sunday next, I care not what the tone of its theological thought, and observe the first Lord's Prayer used at the beginning of the Communion Service. They will find that this general rubric is universally neglected, and the celebrating priest says the opening Lord's Prayer by himself with no voice of the people raised to accompany him. Now whence comes this universal fact? It is simply an illustration of the strength of tradition. It is a survival of the practice before the Reformation handed down by tradition to the present time, and over-riding a positive and written law. In

the days before the Reformation, as in the Roman Catholic Church of the present day, the opening Dominical or Lord's Prayer in the Mass was said by the priest alone. When the service was translated into English the old custom still prevailed, and has lasted to the present day.[1] This was only human nature, which abhors unnecessary changes, and is intensely conservative of every practice which is linked with the fond memories of the past. This human nature was found strong in St. Paul, as in other men, and it would have argued no moral or spiritual weakness, no desire to play fast and loose with gospel liberties, had he, instead of Aquila, resorted to the old Jewish practice and bound himself by a vow in connexion with some special blessing which he had received, or some special danger he had incurred. When we are studying the Acts we must never forget that Judaism gave the tone and form, the whole outer framework to Christianity, even as England gave the outward shape and form to the constitutions of the United States and her own numberless colonies throughout the world. St. Paul did not invent a brand new religion, as some people think; he changed as little as possible, so that his own practice and worship must have been to mere pagan eyes exactly the same as that of the Jews, as indeed we might conclude beforehand from the fact that the Roman authorities seem to have viewed the Christians as a mere Jewish sect down to the close of the second century.[2]

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[1] See Procter on the Common Prayer, p. 212; Canon Evan Daniel on the Prayer Book, pp. 87 and 300.

[2] See on this subject of the confusion of Christianity with Judaism by the Romans, Wieseler's *Die Christenverfolgungen der Cäsaren*, pp 1-10.

I. Let us now take a rapid survey of the extensive journey which our book disposes of in very concise fashion. St. Paul and his companions, Aquila and Priscilla, Timothy and Silas, sailed from Cenchreæ to Ephesus, which city up to this seems to have been untouched by Christian influences. St. Paul, in the earlier portion of his second tour, had been prohibited by the Holy Spirit from preaching in Ephesus, or in any portion of the provinces of Asia or Bithynia. Important as the human eye of St. Paul may have viewed them, still the Divine Guide of the Church saw that neither Asia nor Bithynia, with all their magnificent cities, their accumulated wealth, and their political position, were half so important as the cities and provinces of Europe, viewed from the standpoint of the world's conversion. But now the gospel has secured a substantial foothold in Europe, has taken a firm grasp of that imperial race which then ruled the world, and so the Apostle is permitted to visit Ephesus for the first time. He seems to have then paid a mere passing visit to it, lasting perhaps while the ship discharged the portion of her cargo destined for Ephesus. But St. Paul never allowed time to hang heavy on his hands for want of employment. He left Aquila and Priscilla engaged in their mercantile transactions, and, entering himself into the principal synagogue, proceeded to expound his views. These do not seem to have then aroused any opposition; nay, the Jews even went so far as to desire him to tarry longer and open out his doctrines at greater length. We may conclude from this that St. Paul did not remain during this first visit much beyond one Sabbath day. If he had bestowed a second Sabbath day upon the Ephesian synagogue, his ideas and doctrines would have been

made so clear and manifest that the Jews would not have required much further exposition in order to see their drift. St. Paul, after promising a second visit to them, left his old friends and associates, Aquila and his wife, with whom he had lived for nearly two years, at Ephesus, and pushed on to Cæsarea, a town which he must have already well known, and with which he was subsequently destined to make a long and unpleasant acquaintanceship, arriving at Jerusalem in time probably for the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated on September 16th, A.D. 53. Concerning the details of that visit we know nothing. Four years at least must have elapsed since he had seen James and the other venerated heads of the Mother Church. We can imagine then how joyously he would have told them, how eagerly they would have heard the glad story of the wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through the power of Jesus Christ. After a short sojourn at Jerusalem St. Paul returned back to Cæsarea, and thence went on to Antioch, the original seat of the Gentile mission for the propagation of the faith. After refreshing himself with the kindly offices of fraternal intercourse and conversation at this great Christian centre, where broad liberal sentiment and wide Christian culture, free from any narrow prejudices, must have infused a tone into society far more agreeable to St. Paul than the unprogressive Judaising views which flourished in Jerusalem, St. Paul then determined to set off upon his third great tour, which must have begun at the earliest some time in the spring of A.D. 54, as soon as the snows of winter had passed away and the passes through the Taurus Range into the central regions of Asia Minor had been opened. We know nothing more concerning the extended

journey he took on this occasion. He seems to have avoided towns like Lystra and Derbe, and to have directed his march straight to Galatia, where he had sufficient work to engage all his thought. We have no mention of the names of the particular Churches where he laboured. Ancyra, as it was then called, Angora as it is now named, in all probability demanded St. Paul's attention. If he visited it, he looked as the traveller does still upon the temple dedicated to the deity of Augustus and of Rome, the ruins of which have attracted the notice of every modern antiquary. Glad, however, as we should have been to gratify our curiosity by details like these, we are obliged to content ourselves with the information which St. Luke gives us, that St. Paul "went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, in order, stablishing all the disciples," leaving us a speaking example of the energising power, the invigorating effects, of a visitation such as St. Paul now conducted, sustaining the weak, arousing the careless, restraining the rash, guiding the whole body of the Church with the counsels of sanctified wisdom and heavenly prudence. Then, after his Phrygian and Galatian work was finished, St. Paul betook himself to a field which he long since desired to occupy, and determined to fulfil the promise made a year previously at least to his Jewish friends of the Ephesian Synagogue.

II. Now we come to the foundation of the Ephesian Church some time in the latter part of the year 54 A.D. Heré it may strike some reader as an extraordinary thing that more than twenty years after the Crucifixion Ephesus was as yet totally untouched by the gospel, so that the tidings of salvation were quite a novel sound in the great Asiatic capital. People sometimes

think of the primitive Church as if, after the Day of Pentecost, every individual Christian rushed off to preach in the most distant parts of the world, and that the whole earth was evangelised straight off. They forget the teaching of Christ about the gospel leaven, and leaven never works all on an heap as it were; it is slow, regular, progressive in its operations. The tradition, too, that the apostles did not leave Jerusalem till twelve years after His ascension ought to be a sufficient corrective of this false notion; and though this tradition may not have any considerable historical basis, yet it shows that the primitive Church did not cherish the very modern idea that enormous and immediate successes followed upon the preaching of the gospel after Pentecost, and that the conversion of vast populations at once occurred. The case was exactly contrary. For many a long year nothing at all was done towards the conversion of the Gentile world, and then for many another long year the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles entirely depended upon St. Paul alone. He was the one evangelist of the Gentiles, and therefore it is no wonder he should have said in 1 Cor. i. 17, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." He was the one man fitted to deal with the prejudices, the ignorance, the sensuality, the grossness with which the Gentile world was overspread, and therefore no other work, no matter how important, was to be allowed to interfere with that one task which he alone could perform. This seems to me the explanation of the question which might otherwise cause some difficulty, how was it that the Ephesians, Jews and Gentiles alike, inhabiting this distinguished city, were still in such dire ignorance of the gospel message

twenty years after the Ascension? Now let us come to the story of the circumstances amid which Ephesian Christianity took its rise. St. Paul, as we have already said, paid a passing visit to Ephesus just a year before when going up to Jerusalem, when he seems to have made a considerable impression in the synagogue. He left behind him Aquila and Priscilla, who, with their household, formed a small Christian congregation, meeting doubtless for the celebration of the Lord's Supper in their own house while yet frequenting the stated worship of the synagogue. This we conclude from the following circumstance which is expressly mentioned in Acts xviii. 26. Apollos, a Jew, born in Alexandria, and a learned man, as was natural coming from that great centre of Greek and Oriental culture, came to Ephesus. He had been baptized by some of John's disciples, either at Alexandria or in Palestine. It may very possibly have been at Alexandria. St. John's doctrines and followers may have spread to Alexandria by that time, as we are expressly informed they had been diffused as far as Ephesus (see ch. xix. 1-4). Apollos, when he came to Ephesus, entered, like St. Paul, into the synagogue, and "spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John." He knew about Jesus Christ, but with an imperfect knowledge such merely as John himself possessed. This man began to speak boldly in the synagogue on the topic of the Messiah whom John had preached. Aquila and Priscilla were present in the synagogue, heard the disputant, recognised his earnestness and his defects, and then, having taken him, expounded to him the way of God more fully, initiating him into the full mysteries of the faith by baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost.[1] This incident has an important bearing upon the foundation and development of the Ephesian Church, but it bears more directly still upon the point on which we have been dwelling. Apollos disputed in the synagogues where Aquila and Priscilla heard him, so that

[1] Meyer, in his Commentary on ch. xix. 5, enunciates the following extraordinary theory about Apollos, which plainly shows that, valuable as may be his textual criticism, his conception of Christian doctrine and of Apostolic Church life is very defective: "We may not infer from this passage that the disciples of John, who passed over to Christianity, were uniformly re-baptized; for in the case of the apostles who passed over from John to Jesus this certainly did not take place; and even as regards Apollos the common opinion that he was baptized by Aquila is purely arbitrary, as in xviii. 26 his instruction in Christianity, and not his baptism, is narrated." Again: "Apollos could dispense with re-baptism, seeing that he, with his fervid spirit, following the references of John to Christ, and the instruction of his teachers, penetrated without any new baptismal consecration into the pneumatic elements of life." Meyer evidently fails to grasp what the sacrament of baptism was, as conceived by St. Paul, and uses the most dangerous line of argument, that from silence, concluding that, because there is no mention of the Christian baptism of Apollos, therefore such a baptism never took place. But this is not all. Meyer's theory cannot possibly explain why baptism was necessary for Cornelius, though he enjoyed the gift of the Holy Ghost, while it was not necessary for Apollos, "who penetrated without any new baptismal consecration into the pneumatic element of life." Meyer says, indeed, that in the whole New Testament there is no example except in xix. 1-5 of the re-baptism of a disciple of John. But then in the Acts and Epistles, where alone we read of the administration of Christian baptism, there are only two examples of the admission of John's disciples. In one case twelve such were admitted, and they were all baptized by Paul's own order. In the case of Apollos there is silence. Surely the sounder conclusion is that Christian baptism was administered there too, though nothing is said about it! As for the apostles not being baptized with Christian baptism, the explanation is not far to seek. Baptism is the reception of a disciple into covenant with Christ through the medium of water. In the case of the apostles this reception took place in person, and not through any medium. In the apostles' case, too, there is another consideration. Meyer's conclusion is simply one *e silentio* even in their case. We know not, however, everything that Christ did as regards His apostles.

they must have been regular worshippers there notwithstanding their Christian profession and their close intercourse with St. Paul for more than eighteen months. After a little time further, Apollos desired to pass over to Greece. The little Christian Church which met at Aquila's house told him of the wonders they had seen and heard in Achaia and of the flourishing state of the Church in Corinth. They gave him letters commendatory to that Church, whither Apollos passed over, and rendered such valuable help that his name a year or two later became one of the watchwords of Corinthian party strife. The way was now prepared for St. Paul's great mission to Ephesus, exceeding in length any mission he had hitherto conducted, surpassing in its duration of three years the time spent even at Corinth itself. His own brief visit of the year before, the visit and work of the Alexandrian Jew, the quiet conversations, the holy lives, the sanctified examples of Aquila and Priscilla, these had done the preliminary work. They had roused expectation, provoked discussion, developed thought. Everything was ready for the great masterful teacher to step upon the ground and complete the work which he had already so auspiciously begun.

I do not propose to discuss the roads by which St. Paul may have travelled through the province of Asia on this eventful visit, nor to discuss the architectural features, or the geographical position of the city of Ephesus. These things I shall leave to the writers who have treated of St. Paul's life. I now confine myself to the notices inserted by St. Luke concerning the Apostle's Ephesian work, and about it I note that upon his arrival St. Paul came in contact with a small congregation of the disciples of John the

Baptist,[1] who had hitherto escaped the notice of the small Church existing at Ephesus. This need not excite our wonder. We are apt to think that because Christianity is now such a dominant element in our own intellectual and religious atmosphere it must always have been the same. Ephesus, too, was then an immense city, with a large population of Jews, who may have had many synagogues. These few disciples of John the Baptist may have worshipped in a synagogue which never heard of the brief visit of a Cilician Jew, a teacher named Saul of Tarsus, much less of the quiet efforts of Aquila and Priscilla, the tentmakers, lately come from Corinth. St. Paul, on his second visit, soon came in contact with these men. He at once asked them a question which tested their position and attainments in the Divine life, and sheds for us a vivid light upon apostolic doctrine and practice. "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" is plainly an inquiry whether they had enjoyed the blessing connected with the solemn imposition of hands, from which has been derived the rite of confirmation, as I showed in the previous volume. The disciples soon revealed the imperfect character of their religion by their reply:

[1] The movement instituted by St. John the Baptist was perpetuated into the second century, and in some measure developed into, or connected itself with, the sect subsequently called the Hemerobaptists. The history of this movement from apostolic days is elaborately traced by Bishop Lightfoot in his Essay on the Essenes, contained in his *Colossians and Philemon*; see especially pp. 400-407, to which we must refer the reader desirous of more information. The Hemerobaptists are mentioned in the *Clementine Recognitions*, i. 54, the *Clementine Homilies*, ii. 23, which date from about 200 A.D., and in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, vi. 6, which may be put down as a century later. This shows the continuity of the sect. There are still some fragments of it existing in Babylonia, under the name of Mandeans: see further the article "Sabians" in Smith's *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, iv. 569-73.

"Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was," words which led St. Paul to demand what in that case was the nature of their baptism. "Into what then were ye baptized?" and they said, "Into John's baptism."

Now the simple explanation of the disciples' ignorance was that they had been baptized with John's baptism, which had no reference to or mention of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul, understanding them to be baptized disciples, could not understand their ignorance of the personal existence and present power of the Holy Ghost, till he learned from them the nature of their baptism, and then his surprise ceased. But then we must observe that the question of the Apostle astonished at their defective state—"Into what then were ye baptized?"—implies that, if baptized with Christian baptism, they would have known of the existence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore further implies that the baptismal formula into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was of universal application among Christians; for surely if this formula were not universally used by the Church, many Christians might be in exactly the same position as these disciples of John, and never have heard of the Holy Ghost![1] St. Paul, having expounded the difference between the inchoate, imperfect, beginning knowledge, of the Baptist, and the richer, fuller teaching of Jesus Christ, then handed them over for further preparation to his assistants, by whom, after due fasting and prayer, they were baptized,[2] and at once presented to the Apostle for the imposition

[1] See my remarks on this topic on pp. 141, 142 of my first volume on Acts.

[2] See the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, concerning the methods used in preparation for baptism.

of hands; when the Holy Ghost was vouchsafed in present effects, "they spake with tongues and prophesied," as if to sanction in a special manner the decided action taken by the Apostle on this occasion.

The details concerning this affair, given to us by the sacred writer, are most important. They set forth at greater length and with larger fulness the methods ordinarily used by the Apostle than on other similar occasions. The Philippian jailor was converted and baptized, but we read nothing of the imposition of hands. Dionysius and Damaris, Aquila and Priscilla, and many others at Athens and Corinth, were converted, but there is no mention of either baptism or any other holy rite. It might have been very possible to argue that the silence of the writer implied utter contempt of the sacraments of the gospel and the rite of confirmation on these occasions, were it not that we have this detailed account of the manner in which St. Paul dealt with half-instructed, unbaptized, and unconfirmed disciples of Christ Jesus. They were instructed, baptized, and confirmed, and thus introduced into the fulness of blessing, required by the discipline of the Lord, as ministered by his faithful servant. If this were the routine observed with those who had been taught "carefully the things of Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John," how much more would it have been the case with those rescued out of the pollutions of paganism and called into the kingdom of light!

III. After this favourable beginning, and seeing the borders of the infant Church extended by the union of these twelve disciples, St. Paul, after his usual fashion, flung himself into work amongst the Jews of Ephesus upon whom he had previously made a favourable impression. He was well received for a time. He continued

for three months "reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God." But, as it was elsewhere, so was it at Ephesus, the offence of the Cross told in the long run upon the worshippers of the synagogue. The original Christian Church was Jewish. Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos and Timothy, and the disciples of John the Baptist would have excited no resentment in the minds of the Jews; but when St. Paul began to open out the hope which lay for Gentiles as well as for Jews in the gospel which he preached, then the objections of the synagogue were multiplied, riots and disturbances became, as elsewhere, matters of daily occurrence, and the opposition became at last so bitter that, as at Corinth, so here again at Ephesus the Apostle was obliged to separate his own followers, and gather them into the school of one Tyrannus, a teacher of philosophy or rhetoric, whom perhaps he had converted, where the blasphemous denunciations against the Divine Way which he taught could no longer be heard.[1] In this school or lecture-hall St. Paul continued labouring for more than two years, bestowing upon the city of Ephesus a longer period of continuous labour than he ever vouchsafed to any place else. We have St. Paul's own statement as to his method of life at this period in the address he subsequently delivered to the elders of Ephesus. The Apostle pursued at Ephesus the same course which he adopted at Corinth in one important direction at least. He supported himself and his immediate companions, Timothy and Sosthenes, by his own labour, and that we may presume for precisely the

[1] See pp. 32, 33 above for some remarks on this title, the Way, used in the Acts for the Gospel Dispensation or the Christian Church. Cf. also ch. ix. 2, xix. 23, xxii. 4, xxiv. 14, and the expression the Way of Life in the *Didache*.

same reason at Ephesus as at Corinth. He desired to cut off all occasion of accusation against himself. Ephesus was a city devoted to commerce and to magic. It was full of impostors too, many of them Jewish, who made gain out of the names of angels and magical formulæ derived from the pretended wisdom of Solomon handed down to them by secret succession, or derived to them from contact with the lands of the far-distant East. St. Paul determined, therefore, that he would give no opportunity of charging him with trading upon the credulity of his followers, or working with an eye to covetous or dishonest gains. "I coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me," is the description he gave of the manner in which he discharged his apostolic office in Ephesus, when addressing the elders of that city. We can thus trace St. Paul labouring at his trade as a tentmaker for nearly a period of five years, combining the time spent at Ephesus with that spent at Corinth. Notwithstanding, however, the attention and energy which this exercise of his trade demanded, he found time for enormous evangelistic and pastoral work. In fact, we find St. Paul nowhere else so much occupied with pastoral work as at Ephesus. Elsewhere we see the devoted evangelist, rushing in with the pioneers, breaking down all hindrances, heading the stormers to whom was committed the fiercest struggle, the most deadly conflict, and then at once moving into fresh conflicts, leaving the spoils of victory and the calmer work of peaceful pastoral labours to others. But here in Ephesus we see St. Paul's marvellous power of adaptation. He is at one hour a clever artisan capable of gaining support sufficient for others as well

as for himself; then he is the skilful controversialist "reasoning daily in the school of one Tyrannus"; and then he is the indefatigable pastor of souls "teaching publicly, and from house to house," and "ceasing not to admonish every one night and day with tears."

But this was not all, or nearly all, the burden the Apostle carried. He had to be perpetually on the alert against Jewish plots. We hear nothing directly of Jewish attempts on his life or liberty during the period of just three years which he spent on this prolonged visit. We might be sure, however, from our previous experience of the synagogues, that he must have run no small danger in this direction; but then when we turn to the same address we hear something of them. He is recalling to the minds of the Ephesian elders the circumstances of his life in their community from the beginning, and he therefore appeals thus: "Ye yourselves know from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, *and with trials which befell me with plots of the Jews.*" Ephesus again was a great field wherein he personally worked; it was also a great centre for missionary operations which he superintended. It was the capital of the province of Asia, the richest and most important of all the Roman provinces, teeming with resources, abounding in highly civilised and populous cities, connected with one another by an elaborate network of admirably constructed roads. Ephesus was cut out by nature and by art alike as a missionary centre whence the gospel should radiate out into all the surrounding districts. And so it did. "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks," is the testimony of St. Luke with respect to

the wondrous progress of the gospel, not in Ephesus alone, but also throughout all the province, a statement which we find corroborated a little lower down in the same nineteenth chapter by the independent testimony of Demetrius the silversmith, who, when he was endeavouring to stir up his fellow-craftsmen to active exertions in defence of their endangered trade, says, "Ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people." St. Paul's disciples laboured, too, in the other cities of Asia, as Epaphras for instance in Colossæ. And St. Paul himself, we may be certain, bestowed the gifts and blessings of his apostolic office by visiting these local Churches, as far as he could consistently with the pressing character of his engagements in Ephesus.[1] But even the superintendence of vast missions throughout the province of Asia did not exhaust the prodigious labours of St. Paul. He perpetually bore about in his bosom anxious thoughts for the welfare, trials, and sorrows of the numerous Churches he had established in Europe and Asia alike. He was constant in prayers for them, mentioning the individual members by name, and he

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, *Colossians*, Introd., p. 30, has some good remarks bearing on this topic: "How or when the conversion of the Colossians took place we have no direct information. Yet it can hardly be wrong to connect the event with St. Paul's long sojourn at Ephesus. Here he remained preaching for three whole years. It is possible, indeed, that during this period he paid short visits to other neighbouring cities of Asia; but if so, the notices in the Acts oblige us to suppose these interruptions to his residence in Ephesus to have been slight and infrequent. Yet, though the Apostle himself was stationary in the capital, the Apostolic influence and teaching spread far beyond the limits of the city and its immediate neighbourhood. It was hardly an exaggeration when Demetrius declared that 'almost throughout all Asia this Paul had persuaded and turned away much people.' The

was unwearied in keeping up communications with them, either by verbal messages or by written epistles, one specimen of which remains in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written to them from Ephesus, and showing us the minute care, the comprehensive interest, the intense sympathy which dwelt within his breast with regard to his distant converts all the while that the work at Ephesus, controversial, evangelistic and pastoral, to say nothing at all of his tentmaking, was making the most tremendous demands on body and soul alike, and apparently absorbing all his attention. It is only when we thus realise bit by bit what the weak, delicate, emaciated Apostle must have been doing, that we are able to grasp the full meaning of his own words to the Corinthians: "Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches."

This lengthened period of intense activity of mind and body terminated in an incident which illustrates the peculiar character of St. Paul's Ephesian ministry. Ephesus was a town where the spiritual and moral atmosphere simply reeked with the fumes, ideas, and practices of Oriental paganism, of which magical in-

sacred historian himself uses equally strong language in describing the effects of the Apostle's preaching: 'All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.' In accordance with these notices the Apostle himself, in an Epistle written during this sojourn, sends salutations to Corinth, not from the Church of Ephesus specially, as might have been anticipated, but from the 'Churches of Asia' generally (1 Cor. xvi. 19). St. Luke, it should be observed, ascribes this dissemination of the gospel not to journeys undertaken by the Apostle, but to his preaching at Ephesus itself. Thither, as to the metropolis of Western Asia, would flock crowds from all the towns and villages far and near. Thence they would carry away, each to his own neighbourhood, the spiritual treasure which they had so unexpectedly found.'

cantations formed the predominant feature. Magic prevailed all over the pagan world at this time. In Rome, however, magical practices were always more or less under the ban of public opinion, though at times resorted to even by those whose office called upon them to suppress illegal actions. A couple of years before the very time at which we have arrived, workers in magic, among whom were included astrologers, or mathematicians, as the Roman law called them, were banished from Rome simultaneously with the Jews, who always enjoyed an unenviable notoriety for such occult practices.[1] In Asia Minor and the East they flourished at this time under the patronage of religion, and continued to flourish in all the great cities down to Christian times. Christianity itself could not wholly banish magic which retained its hold upon the half-converted Christians who flocked into the Church in crowds during the second half of the fourth century; and we learn from St. Chrysostom himself, that when a young man he had a narrow escape for his life owing to the continuance of magical practices in Antioch, more than three hundred years after St. Paul.[2] It is no wonder that when Diana's worship

[1] I allude, of course, to the decree of Claudius against the Jews in A.D. 52, to which Suetonius (*Claudius*, 25) and Dio Cassius, lx. 6, refer; cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 52, and Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, A.D. 52.

[2] The story is an interesting one. It will be found in Stephens' *Life of St. Chrysostom*, p. 61. The Emperor Valens had discovered that some of his enemies had been endeavouring, through magical contrivances something like table-rapping, to spell out the name of his successor, and had succeeded so far that they had found out the first part of the name as Theod, but the oracle could tell nothing more. The jealous Emperor ordered every prominent man with the names Theodore or Theodosius to be slain, vainly thinking to kill his own successor. He also ordered every one found with magical books in their possession to be at once slain. Chrysostom and a friend were

reigned supreme at Ephesus, magical practices should also flourish there. If, however, there existed a special development of the power of evil at Ephesus, God also bestowed a special manifestation of Divine power in the person and ministry of St. Paul, as St. Luke expressly declares: "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits departed from them." This passage has been often found a stumbling-block by many persons. They have thought that it has a certain legendary air about it, as they in turn think that there is a certain air of legend about the similar passage in Acts v. 12-16, which makes much the same statement about St. Peter. When writing about this latter passage in my previous volume, p. 230, I offered some suggestions which lessen, if they

walking in A.D. 374 on the banks of the Orontes when they saw a book floating down the stream. They stretched forth and rescued it, when, seeing that it was a magical book, they at once flung it back into the river, and not a moment too soon, as just then a police officer on detective duty appeared on the scene, from whom a moment earlier they could not have escaped. St. Chrysostom always regarded this as one of the great escapes of his life: see Art. "Chrysostom" in *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, vol. i., p. 520, and his own reference to the escape in his 38th Homily on the Acts, translated in the Oxford Library of the Fathers. Mr. Stephens, *l.c.*, gives an account of the magical rites and their ceremonial, which was doubtless much the same in A.D. 374 as in A.D. 54, whence we take a brief extract: "The twenty-four letters of the alphabet were arranged at intervals round the rim of a kind of charger, which was placed on a tripod consecrated by magic songs and frequent ceremonies. The diviner, habited as a heathen priest, in linen robes, sandals, and with a fillet wreathed about his head, chanted a hymn to Apollo, the god of prophecy, while a ring in the centre of the charger was slipped rapidly round a slender thread. The letters in front of which the ring successively stopped indicated the character of the oracle."

do not quite take away, the difficulty; to these I shall now only refer my readers. But I think we can see a local reason for the peculiar development or manifestation of miraculous power through St. Paul. The devil's seat was just then specially at Ephesus, so far as the great province of Asia was concerned. The powers of evil had concentrated all their force and all their wealth of external grandeur, intellectual cleverness, and spiritual trickery in order to lead men captive; and there God, in order that He might secure a more striking victory for truth upon this magnificent stage, armed His faithful servant with an extraordinary development of the good powers of the world to come, enabling him to work special wonders in the sight of the heathen. Can we not read an echo of the fearful struggle just then waged in the metropolis of Asia in words addressed some years later to the members of the same Church, "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"? We make a great mistake when we think of the apostles as working miracles when and as they liked. At times their evangelistic work seems to have been conducted without any extraordinary manifestations, and then at other times, when the power of Satan was specially put forth, God displayed His special strength, enabling His servants to work wonders and signs in His Name. It was much the same as in the Old Testament. The Old Testament miracles will be found to cluster themselves round the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and its Reformation at the hand of Elijah. So, too, the recorded miracles of the apostles will be found to gather round St. Peter's earlier work in Jerusalem,

where Satan strove to counter-work God's designs in one way, and St. Paul's ministry in Ephesus, where Satan strove to counter-work them in another way. One incident at Ephesus attracted special attention. There was a priestly family, consisting of seven sons, belonging to the Jews at Ephesus. Their father had occupied high position among the various courses which in turn served the Temple, even as Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, did. These men observed the power with which St. Paul dealt with human spirits disordered by the powers of evil, using for that purpose the sacred name of Jesus. They undertook to use the same sacred invocation; but it proved, like the censers of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, a strange fire kindled against their own souls. The man possessed by the evil spirit recognised not their presumptuous efforts, but attacked them, and did them serious bodily injury. This circumstance spread the fame of the man of God wider and wider. The power of magic and of the demons fell before him, even as the image of Dagon fell before the Ark. Many of the nominal believers in Christianity had still retained their magical practices as of yore, even as nominal Christians retained them in the days of St. Chrysostom. The reality of St. Paul's power, demonstrated by the awful example of Sceva's sons, smote them in their inmost conscience. They came, confessed their deeds, brought their magical books together,[1] and gave the greatest proof of their

[1] The magical books thus consigned to the flames by the Christian believers who practised magic were filled with figures or characters technically called "Ephesian letters," Γράμματα Ἐφέσια. These were mystic characters and strange words which were engraven on the crown, zone, and feet of the goddess. Clement of Alexandria discusses their use, and says the Greeks were greatly addicted to them, in his

honest convictions; for they burned them in the sight of all, and counting the price thereof found it fifty thousand pieces of silver, or more than two thousand pounds of our money. "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" in the very chosen seat of the Ephesian Diana.

Stromata, v. 8, as translated in Clement's works, vol. ii., p. 247, in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library. The same use of curious mystic words passed over to the Manichæans and other secret sects of mediæval times. See also Guhl's *Ephesiaca*, p. 94 (Berlin, 1843), where all the authorities on this curious subject are collected together. Conybeare and Howson, ch. xiv., give them from Guhl in a handy shape. Great quantities of these "Ephesian letters" have been found among the Fayûm Manuscripts discovered in Egypt, which almost universally make a large use of the name Iao or Jehovah, showing their contact with Judaism.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EPHESIAN RIOT AND A PRUDENT TOWN CLERK.

"About that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands; and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."—ACTS xix. 23-8.

ST. PAUL'S labours at Ephesus covered, as he informs us himself, when addressing the elders of that city, a space of three years. The greater portion of that period had now expired, and had been spent in peaceful labours so far as the heathen world and the Roman authorities were concerned. The Jews, indeed, had been very troublesome at times. It is in all probability to them and their plots St. Paul refers when in 1 Cor. xv. 32 he says, "If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me?" as the unbelieving Gentiles do not seem to have raised any insurrection against his teaching till he felt his work was done, and he was, in fact, preparing to leave Ephesus. Before, however, we proceed to discuss

the startling events which finally decided his immediate departure, we must consider a brief passage which connects the story of Sceva's sons and their impious temerity with that of the silversmith Demetrius and the Ephesian riot.

The incident connected with Sceva's sons led to the triumph over the workers in magic, when the secret professors of that art came and publicly acknowledged their hidden sins, proving their reality by burning the instruments of their wickedness. Here, then, St. Luke inserts a notice which has proved to be of the very greatest importance in the history of the Christian Church. Let us insert it in full that we may see its bearing: "Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while." This passage tells us that St. Paul, after his triumph over the practices of magic, and feeling too that the Church had been effectually cleansed, so far as human foresight and care could effect it, from the corroding effects of the prevalent Ephesian vice, now determined to transfer the scene of his labours to Macedonia and Achaia, wishing to visit those Churches which five years before he had founded. It was full five years, at least, since he had seen the Philippian, Thessalonian, and Berœan congregations. Better than three years had elapsed since he had left Corinth, the scene of more prolonged work than he had ever bestowed on any other city except Ephesus. He had heard again and again from all these places, and some of the reports, especially those from Corinth, had been very dis-

quieting. The Apostle wished, therefore, to go and see for himself how the Churches of Christ in Macedonia and Achaia were faring. He next wished to pay a visit to Jerusalem to consult with his brethren, and then felt his destiny pushing him still westwards, desiring to see Rome, the world's capital, and the Church which had sprung up there, of which his friends Priscilla and Aquila must have told him much. Such seems to have been his intentions in the spring of the year 57, to which his three years' sojourn in Ephesus seems now to have brought him.

The interval of time covered by the two verses which I have quoted above is specially interesting, because it was just then that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written. All the circumstances and all the indications of time which the Epistle itself offers conspire to fix the writing of it to this special date and place. The Epistle, for instance, refers to Timothy as having been already sent into Macedonia and Greece: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which be in Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 17). In Acts xix. 22 we have it stated, "Having sent into Macedonia Timothy and Erastus." The Epistle again plainly tells us the very season of the year in which it was written. The references to the Passover season—"For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ; wherefore let us keep the feast"—are words which naturally were suggested by the actual celebration of the Jewish feast, to a mind like St. Paul's, which readily grasped at every passing allusion or chance incident to illustrate his present teaching. Timothy and Erastus had been despatched in the early spring, as soon as the passes and roads were thoroughly open and navigation established.

The Passover in A.D. 57 happened on April 7th, and the Apostle fixes the exact date of the First Epistle to Corinth, when in the sixteenth chapter and eighth verse he says to the Corinthians, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." I merely refer now to this point to illustrate the vastness of the Apostle's labours, and to call attention to the necessity for comparing together the Acts and the Epistles in the minute manner exemplified by Paley in the *Horæ Paulinæ*, if we wish to gain a complete view of a life like St. Paul's, so completely consecrated to one great purpose.[1]

Man may propose, but even an apostle cannot dispose of his fate as he will, or foretell under ordinary circumstances how the course of events will affect him. St. Paul intended to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost, which that year happened on May 28th. Circumstances however hastened his departure. We have been considering the story of St. Paul's residence in Ephesus, but hitherto we have not heard one word about the great Ephesian deity, Diana, as the Romans called her, or Artemis, as St. Luke, according to the ordinary local use, correctly calls her in the Greek text of the Acts, or Anaïtis, as her ancient name had been from early times at Ephesus and throughout Asia Minor.[2] If this riot had not happened, if our attention

[1] This subject properly belongs to commentators on 1 Corinthians. Paley, in *Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. iii., and Dr. Marcus Dods, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 104, 105, set forth the evidence in a convenient shape. I may remark that here, as elsewhere, I adopt in the main Mr. Lewin's chronology, as contained in his *Fasti Sacri*. Without pledging myself to agree in all his details, his scheme forms a good working hypothesis, on which a writer can work when composing an expositor's commentary, not one for professed critics or profound scholars

[2] The student may consult on the identification of Artemis and the

had not been thus called to Diana and her worship, there might have been a total blank in St. Luke's narrative concerning this famous deity, and her equally famous temple, which was at the time one of the wonders of the world. And then some scoffers reading in ancient history concerning the wonders of this temple, and finding the records of modern discoveries confirming the statements of antiquity might have triumphantly pointed to St. Luke's silence about Diana and the Ephesian temple as a proof of his ignorance. A mere passing riot alone has saved us from this difficulty. Now this case well illustrates the danger of arguing from silence. Silence concerning any special point is sometimes used as a proof that a particular writer knew nothing about it. But this is not the sound conclusion. Silence proves in itself nothing more than that the person who is silent either had no occasion to speak upon that point or else thought it wiser or more expedient to hold his tongue. Josephus, for instance, is silent about Christianity; but that is no proof that Christianity did not exist in his time, or that he knew nothing about it. His silence may simply have arisen because he found Christianity an awkward fact, and not knowing how to deal with it he left it alone. It is well to bear this simple law of historical evidence in mind, for a great many of the popular objections to the sacred narratives, both of the Old and New Testaments, are based upon the very dangerous ground of silence alone.[1] Let us, however, return to

Oriental or Persian deity Anaïtis, the *Revue Archéologique* for 1885, vol. ii., pp. 105-115, and Derenbourg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq.*, s.v. Diana.

[1] This argument may be pressed further. The silence which we observe in much of second-century literature about the New Testament Canon and Episcopacy is of the same character. The best known and

Diana of the Ephesians. The worship of the goddess Artemis dominated the whole city of Ephesus,[1] and helped to shape the destinies of St. Paul at this season, for while intending to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost at the end of May, the annual celebration of Artemisia, the feast of the patron deity of the city, happened, of which celebration Demetrius took advantage to raise a disturbance which hastened St. Paul's departure into Macedonia.

We have now cleared the way for the consideration of the narrative of the riot, which is full of the most interesting information concerning the progress of the gospel, and offers us the most wonderful instances of the minute accuracy of St. Luke, which again have been illustrated and confirmed in the fullest manner by the researches so abundantly bestowed upon Ephesus within the lifetime of the present generation. Let us take the narrative in the exact order given us by St. Luke: "About that time there arose no small stir about the Way." But why about that special time? We have already said that here we find an indication of the date of the riot. It must have happened during the latter part of April, A.D. 57, and we know that at Ephesus almost the whole month of April, or Artemisius, was dedicated to the honour and worship of Artemis.[2] But here it may be asked, How did it come

most notorious facts are those about which authors are most apt to be silent when writing for contemporaries, simply because every person acknowledges them and takes them for granted.

[1] This is manifest at once if the reader will consult Mr. Wood's *Ephesus* or Guhl's *Ephesiaca*, a work which, though published (in 1843) before modern discoveries had taught all we now know, is a most elaborate account of ancient Ephesus gleaned out of ancient writers.

[2] See on the exact time of the Macedonian and Ephesian month of Artemisius, Ussher's treatise on the Macedonian and Asiatic solar year,

to pass that Artemis or Diana occupied such a large share in the public worship of Ephesus and the province of Asia? Has modern research confirmed the impression which this chapter leaves upon the mind, that the Ephesian people were above all else devoted to the worship of the deity? The answers to both these queries are not hard to give, and serve to confirm our belief in the honesty and accuracy of the sacred penman. The worship of Artemis, or of Anaïtis rather, prevailed in the peninsula of Asia Minor from the time of Cyrus, who introduced it six or seven centuries before.[1] Anaïtis was the Asiatic deity of fruitfulness, the same as Ashtoreth of the Bible, whom the Greeks soon identified with their own goddess Artemis. Her worship quickly spread, specially through that portion of the country which afterwards became the province of Asia, and through the adjacent districts; showing how rapidly an evil taint introduced into a nation's spiritual life-blood spreads throughout its whole organisation, and when once introduced how persistently it holds its ground; a lesson taught here in New Testa-

in the seventh volume of his works Ed. Elrington, p. 425, with which may be compared Bishop Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, i. 660-700. Mr. Lewin, in his *Fasti Sacri*, p. 309, makes it the month of May. The Macedonian month Artemisius extended from March 25th to April 24th. This point is further discussed in Lewin's *St. Paul*, vol. i., p. 405. If St. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians at or shortly before April 7th, the date of the Passover, the riot which hastened his departure must have happened within the succeeding fortnight. Bœckh, in the Corpus of Greek Inscriptions, No. 2954, inserts a long Greek inscription, found one hundred and seventy years ago at Ephesus, laying down the ceremonial to be observed in honour of the deity throughout the whole month, which Mr. Lewin translates, vol. i., p. 405. See, however, more upon this below.

[1] The Persian language was still used in the worship of Diana at Hierocæsarea and Hypæpa, two well-known towns of the province of Asia in the second century of our era. See Pausanias, v. 27; cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 62, and Ramsay's *Hist. Geog.*, p. 128.

ment times, as in Old Testament days it was proclaimed in Israel's case by the oft-repeated statement concerning her kings, "Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam [king after king] departed not." The spiritual life and tone of a nation is a very precious thing, and because it is so the Church of England does well to bestow so much of her public supplication upon those who have power, like Cyrus and Jeroboam, to taint it at the very foundation and origin thereof. When, for instance, St. Paul landed at Perga in Pamphylia, on the first occasion when he visited Asia Minor as a Christian missionary, his eye was saluted with the splendid temple of Diana on the side of the hill beneath which the city was built, and all over the country at every important town similar temples were erected in her honour, where their ruins have been traced by modern travellers.[1] The cult or worship introduced by Cyrus exactly suited the morals and disposition of these Oriental Greeks, and flourished accordingly.

Artemis was esteemed the protectress of the cities where her temples were built, which, as in the case of Ephesus and of Perga, were placed outside the gates like the temple of Jupiter at Lystra, in order that their presence might cast a halo of protection over the adjacent communities. The temple of Diana at Ephesus

[1] Voluntary associations were formed all over Asia Minor to cultivate the worship of Artemis. Modern research, for instance, has found inscriptions raised by the Xenoi Tekmoreioi indicating their peculiar devotion to Diana and her worship. They specially flourished at a place called Saghir, near Antioch in Pisidia. It is a curious fact that the cult of the B.V.M. has been substituted for that of Artemis by the Greeks of the neighbourhood, and a feast in her honour is celebrated at the same time as the ancient feast. See *Revue Archéologique*, 1887, vol. i., p. 96; Ramsay, in his *Geography of Asia Minor*, p. 409, and in *Jour. Hell. Studies* for 1883.

was a splendid building. It had been several times destroyed by fire notwithstanding its revered character and the presence of the sacred image,[1] and had been as often rebuilt with greater splendour than before, till the temple was erected existing in St. Paul's day, which justly excited the wonder of mankind, as its splendid ruins have shown, which Mr. Wood has excavated in our own time at the expense of the English Government.[2] The devotion of the Ephesians to this ancient Asiatic deity had even been increasing of late years when St. Paul visited Ephesus, as a decree still exists in its original shape graven in stone exactly as St. Paul must have seen it enacting extended honours to the deity. As this decree bears directly upon the famous riot which Demetrius raised, we insert it here in full, as an interesting confirmation and illustration of the sacred narrative: "To the Ephesian Diana. Forasmuch as it is notorious that not only among the Ephesians, but also everywhere among the Greek nations, temples are consecrated to her, and sacred precincts, and that she hath images and altars dedicated

[1] The original sacred image, which was preserved inside a screen or curtain in the inmost temple, was a shapeless mass of wood something like the prehistoric blocks of wood or stone which were esteemed at Athens and elsewhere the most venerable images of their favourite deities: see Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, i. 26. The legend at Ephesus was just the same as at Athens and elsewhere, that these prehistoric images had fallen down from heaven. Some of them may have been aerolites.

[2] The temple of Ephesus is depicted in Conybeare and Howson's and Lewin's *St. Paul*, as well as it could have been restored from a study of books. At the time of their publication neither Mr. Wood's discoveries had been made nor his work on Ephesus published. The plans and engravings in Mr. Wood's work of course supersede all others. The plans, etc., in the other works are sufficiently accurate to enable the reader to realise the language of the Acts.

to her on account of her plain manifestations of herself, and that, besides, the greatest token of veneration paid to her, a month is called after her name, by us Artemision, by the Macedonians and other Greek nations and their cities, Artemisius, in which month general gatherings and festivals are celebrated, and more especially in our own city, the nurse of its own, the Ephesian goddess. Now the people of Ephesus deeming it proper that the whole month called by her name should be sacred and set apart to the goddess, have resolved by this decree, that the observation of it by them be altered. Therefore it is enacted, that the whole month Artemision in all the days of it shall be holy, and that throughout the month there shall be a continued celebration of feasts and the Artemisian festivals and the holy days, seeing that the entire month is sacred to the goddess; for from this improvement in her worship our city shall receive additional lustre and enjoy perpetual prosperity."[1] Now this decree, which preceded St. Paul's labours perhaps by twenty years or more, has an important bearing on our subject. St. Luke tells us that "about this time there arose no small stir about the Way"; and it was only quite natural and quite in accord with what we know of other pagan persecutions, and of human nature in general, that the precise time at which the Apostle had then arrived should have been marked by this riot. The whole city of Ephesus was then given up to the celebration of the festival held in honour of what we may call the national religion and the national deity. That festival lasted the whole month, and was accompanied, as all human festivals are apt to be accompanied, with a

[1] The original of this decree will be found in Bœckh's *Corp. Inscriptt. Græc.*, No. 2954, and the translation in Lewin's *St. Paul*, 405.

vast deal of drunkenness and vice, as we are expressly told in an ancient Greek romance, written by a Greek of whom little is known, named Achilles Tatius.[1] The people of Ephesus were, in fact, mad with excitement, and it did not require any great skill to stir them up to excesses in defence of the endangered deity whose worship was the glory of their city. We know from one or two similar cases that the attack made upon St. Paul at this pagan festival had exact parallels in these early ages.

This festival in honour of Diana was generally utilised as the meeting-time of the local diet or parliament of the province of Asia, where deputies from

[1] There is a long account of Achilles Tatius in the *Bibliotheca Græca* of Fabricius. He was a pagan first, and then became a Christian. His age is uncertain, but he certainly seems to have lived when pagan feasts were still observed in their ancient splendour. The book in which he describes them is called *De Amoribus Clitophontis et Leucippes*, where in Book VI., ch. iii. there is an account of the drunkenness and idleness at the feast of Diana. The words of Achilles Tatius bring the scene vividly before us as St. Paul must have seen it: "It was the festival of Artemis, and every place was full of drunken men, and all the market-place was full of a multitude of men through the whole night." In Mason's *Diocletian Persecution*, p. 361, there will be found an account of a festival celebrated in honour of Artemis in the same spring season at Ancyra in Galatia. This latter account is useful as giving us an authentic account of a Celtic festival of Diana about the year 306 A.D. It would seem as if an annual public washing of the image of Diana constituted an important part of the ceremonial. Both at Ancyra as told in the Acts of St. Theodotus and at Ephesus the image of Diana was annually carried about in a waggon drawn by mules: see Guhl's *Ephesiaca*, p. 114. At Ancyra, during the Diocletian persecution, seven Christian virgins were dressed as priestesses of Diana and condemned to publicly wash the idol. Upon their refusal they were all drowned in the lake where the image was washed. The Seven Virgins of Ancyra are celebrated in the annals of Christian martyrdom for their heroic resistance on this occasion. See Mason, *l.c.*, and the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, *s.v.* Seven Virgins of Ancyra and Theodotus.

all the cities of the province met together to consult on their common wants and transmit their decisions to the proconsul, a point to which we shall later on have occasion to refer. Just ninety years later one of the most celebrated of the primitive martyrs suffered upon the same occasion at Smyrna. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, lived to a very advanced period, and helped to hand down the tradition of apostolic life and doctrine to another generation. Polycarp, is, in fact, through Irenæus, one of the chief historic links uniting the Church of later times with the apostles. Polycarp suffered martyrdom amid the excitement raised during the meeting of the same diet of Asia held, not at Ephesus, but at Smyrna, and attended by the same religious ceremonies and observances. Or let us again turn towards the West, and we shall find it the same. The martyrdoms of Vienne and Lyons described by Eusebius in the fifth book of his history are among the most celebrated in the whole history of the Church, and as such have been already referred to and used in this commentary.[1] These martyrdoms are an illustration of the same fact that the Christians were always exposed to peculiar danger at the annual pagan celebrations. The Gallic tribes, the seven nations of the Gauls, as they were called, were holding their annual diet or assembly, and celebrating the worship of the national deities when their zeal was excited to red-hot pitch against the Christians of Vienne and Lyons, resulting in the terrible outbreak of which Eusebius in his fifth book tells us.[2] As it was in Gaul about 177 A.D. and in Smyrna

[1] See vol. i., pp. 8, 9.

[2] See the articles on Polycarp in the *Dict. Christ. Biog.*, iv. 426, and on Martyrs of Lyons, iii. 764. As regards Polycarp, see also Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. i., p. 436; and as regards the Martyrs of Lyons, see

about 155 A.D., so was it in Ephesus in the year 57; the month's festival, celebrated in honour of Diana, accompanied with eating and drinking and idleness in abundance, told upon the populace, and made them ready for any excess, so that it is no wonder we should read, "About that time there arose no small stir about the Way." Then too there is another circumstance which may have stirred up Demetrius to special violence. His trade was probably falling off owing to St. Paul's labours, and this may have been brought home to him with special force by the results of the festival which was then in process of celebration or perhaps almost finished. All the circumstances fit this hypothesis. The shrine-makers were, we know, a very important element in the population of Ephesus, and the trade of shrine-making and the manufacture of other silver ornaments conduced in no small degree to the commercial prosperity of the city of Ephesus. This is plainly stated upon the face of our narrative: "Ye know that by this business we have our wealth, and ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath turned away much people," facts which could not have been more forcibly brought home to them than by the decreasing call they were experiencing for the particular articles which they produced.

Now the question may be proposed, Was this the fact? Was Ephesus celebrated for its shrine-

Rénan's *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 329, 331. It is interesting to notice, in the writings of St. Paulinus of Nola written about the year 400 A.D., his complaints about the abuses, drunkenness and idleness, connected with the feasts and holy days observed in honour of his great patron and hero St. Felix the Martyr. A similar feeling of the moral dangers connected with religious holy days led to the abbreviation of the week's holiday following Easter and Whitsunday to Monday and Tuesday as at present.

makers, and were shrines and silver ornaments a favourite manufacture in that city? Here modern research comes in to testify to the marked truthfulness, the minute accuracy of St. Luke. We do not now need to appeal to ancient authors, as *Lives of St. Paul* like those written by Mr. Lewin or by Messrs. Conybeare and Howson do. The excavations which have taken place at Ephesus since the publication of these valuable works have amply vindicated the historic character of our narrative on this point. Mr. Wood in the course of his excavations at Ephesus discovered a vast number of inscriptions and sculptures which had once adorned the temple of Ephesus, but upon its destruction had been removed to the theatre, which continued in full operation long after the pagan temple had disappeared.[1] Among these inscriptions there was one enormous one brought to light. It was erected some forty years or so after St. Paul's time, but it serves in the minuteness of its details to illustrate the story of Demetrius, the speech he made, and the riot he raised. This inscription was raised in honour of a wealthy Roman named Gaius Vibius Salutarius, who had dedicated to Artemis a large number of silver images weighing from three to seven pounds each, and had even provided a competent endowment forke eping up a public festival in her honour, which was to be celebrated on the birthday of the goddess, which happened in the month of April or May. The inscription, which contains the particulars of the offering made by this Roman, would take up quite too much space if we desired to insert it. We can only now

[1] The pagan temples were almost universally destroyed about the year 400. The edicts dealing with this matter and an ample commentary upon them will be found in the Theodosian Code, edited by that eminent scholar Godefroy.

refer our readers to Mr. Wood's book on Ephesus, where they will find it given at full length. A few lines may, however, be quoted to illustrate the extent to which the manufacture of silver shrines and silver ornaments in honour of Artemis must have flourished in Ephesus. This inscription enumerates the images dedicated to the goddess which Salutarius had provided by his endowments, entering into the most minute details as to their treatment and care. The following passage gives a vivid picture of Ephesian idolatry as the Apostle saw it: "Let two statues of Artemis of the weight of three pounds three ounces be religiously kept in the custody of Salutarius, who himself consecrated them, and after the death of Salutarius, let the aforesaid statues be restored to the town-clerk of the Ephesians, and let it be made a rule that they be placed at the public meetings above the seat of the council in the theatre before the golden statue of Artemis and the other statues. And a golden Artemis weighing three pounds and two silver deer attending her, and the rest of the images of the weight of two pounds ten ounces and five grammes, and a silver statue of the Sacred Senate of the weight of four pounds two ounces, and a silver statue of the council of the Ephesians. Likewise a silver Artemis bearing a torch of the weight of six pounds, and a silver statue of the Roman people." And so the inscription proceeds to name and devote silver and golden statues literally by dozens, which Salutarius intended to be borne in solemn procession on the feast-day of Diana. It is quite evident that did we possess but this inscription alone, we have here amply sufficient evidence showing us that one of the staple trades of Ephesus, one upon which the prosperity and welfare of a large section of

its inhabitants depended, was this manufacture of silver and gold ornaments directly connected with the worship of the goddess.[1] For it must be remembered that the guild of shrine-makers did not depend alone upon the chance liberality of a stray wealthy Roman or Greek like Salutarius, who might feel moved to create a special endowment or bestow special gifts upon the temple. The guild of shrine-makers depended upon the large and regular demand of a vast population who required a supply of cheap and handy shrines to satisfy their religious cravings. The population of the surrounding districts and towns poured into Ephesus at this annual festival of Diana and paid their devotions in her temple. But even the pagans required some kind of social and family religion. They could not live as too many nominal Christians are contented to live, without any family or personal acknowledgment of their dependence upon a higher power. There was no provision for public worship in the rural districts answering to our parochial system, and so they supplied the want by purchasing on occasions like this feast of Diana, shrines, little silver images, or likenesses of the central cell of the great temple where the sacred image rested, and which served as central points to fix their thoughts and excite the gratitude due to the goddess whom they adored. Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen depended upon the demand created by a vast population of devout believers in Artemis, and when

[1] An interesting confirmation of this fact came to light in modern times. In the year 1830 there was found in Southern France a piece of such Ephesian silver work wrought in honour of Artemis, and carried into Gaul by one of her worshippers. It is now deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and has been fully described in an interesting article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. iii., pp. 104-106, written by that eminent antiquary C. Waldstein.

this demand began to fall off Demetrius traced the bad trade which he and his fellows were experiencing to the true source. He recognised the Christian teaching imparted by St. Paul as the deadly enemy of his unrighteous gains, and naturally directed the rage of the mob against the preacher of truth and righteousness. The actual words of Demetrius are deserving of the most careful study, for they too have been illustrated by modern discovery in the most striking manner. Having spoken of the results of St. Paul's teaching in Asia of which they all had had personal experience, he then proceeds to expatiate on its dangerous character, not only as regards their own personal interests, but as regards the goddess and her sacred dignity as well: "And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." Demetrius cleverly but lightly touches upon the self-interest of the workmen. He does not dwell on that topic too long, because it is never well for an orator who wishes to rouse his hearers to enthusiasm to dwell too long or too openly upon merely selfish consideration. Man is indeed intensely selfish by nature, but then he does not like to be told so too openly, or to have his own selfishness paraded too frequently before his face. He likes to be flattered as if he cherished a belief in higher things, and to have his low ends and baser motives clothed in a similitude of noble enthusiasm. Demetrius hints therefore at their own impoverishment as the results of Paul's teaching, but expatiates on the certain destruction which awaits the glory of their time-honoured and world-renowned deity if free course be any longer

permitted to such doctrine. This speech is a skilful composition all through. It shows that the ancient rhetorical skill of the Greeks still flourished in Ephesus, and not the least skilful, and at the same time not the least true touch in the speech was that wherein Demetrius reminded his hearers that the world were onlookers and watchers of their conduct, noting whether or not they would vindicate Diana's assailed dignity. It was a true touch, I say, for modern research has shown that the worship of the Ephesian Artemis was world-wide in its extent; it had come from the distant east, and had travelled to the farthest west. We have already noted the testimony of modern travellers showing that her worship extended over Asia Minor in every direction. This fact Demetrius long ago told the Ephesians, and ancient authors have repeated his testimony, and modern travellers have merely corroborated them. But we were not aware how accurate was Demetrius about the whole world worshipping Artemis, till in our own time the statues and temples of the Ephesian goddess were found existing so far west as Southern Gaul, Marseilles, and the coast of Spain, proving that wherever Asiatic sailors and Asiatic merchants came thither they brought with them the worship of their favourite deity.[1]

Let us pass on, however, and see whether the

[1] See the *Revue Archéologique* for 1886, vol. ii., p. 257, about the worship of the Ephesian Artemis in Marseilles and Southern Gaul, and an article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1889, vol. x., p. 216, by Professor Ramsay, on the vast extent of Artemis worship in Asia. In the same journal, for 1890, vol. xi., p. 235, we have an account of the discovery of one of the original seats of Artemis worship in Eastern Cilicia by Mr. J. T. Bent; while again, in vol. iv., p. 40-43, Ramsay gives us a subscription list raised in Pisidia for the purpose of building a temple of Artemis in a country district.

remainder of this narrative will not afford us subject-matter for abundant illustrations. The mob drank in the speech of Demetrius, and responded with the national shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," a cry which has been found inscribed on altars and tablets all over the province of Asia, showing that it was a kind of watchword among the inhabitants of that district. The crowd of workmen whom Demetrius had been addressing then rushed into the theatre, the usual place of assembly for the people of Ephesus, dragging with them "Gaius and Aristarchus,[1] men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel." The Jews too followed the mob, eager to make the unexpected tumult serve their own hostile purposes against St. Paul. News of the riot was soon carried to the Apostle, who learning of the danger to which his friends were exposed desired to enter that theatre the magnificent proportions and ornamentation of which have been for the first time displayed to modern eyes by the labours of Mr. Wood. But the local Christians knew the Ephesian mob and their state of excitement better than St. Paul did, and so they would not allow him to risk his life amid the infuriated crowd. The Apostle's teaching too had reached the very highest ranks of Ephesian and Asiatic society. The very Asiarchs, being his friends, sent unto him and requested him not to enter the theatre. Here again we come across one of those incidental references which display St. Luke's acquaintance with the local peculiarities of the Ephesian constitution, and which have been only really appreciated in the light of modern discoveries. In the time of

[1] Aristarchus is described in the Martyrologies as the first bishop of Thessalonica, and is said to have suffered martyrdom under Nero. He is commemorated on August 4th.

King James I., when the Authorised Version was made, the translators knew nothing of the proof of the sacred writer's accuracy which lay under their hands in the words, "Certain of the Asiarchs or chief officers of Asia," and so they translated them very literally but very incorrectly, "Certain of the chief of Asia," ignoring completely the official rank and title which these men possessed. A few words must suffice to give a brief explanation of the office these men held. The province of Asia from ancient times had celebrated this feast of Artemis at an assembly of all the cities of Asia. This we have already explained. The Romans united with the worship of Artemis the worship of the Emperor and of the City of Rome; so that loyalty to the Emperor and loyalty to the national religion went hand in hand. They appointed certain officials to preside at these games, they made them presidents of the local diets or parliaments which assembled to discuss local matters at these national assemblies, they gave them the highest positions in the province next to the pro-consul, they surrounded them with great pomp, and endued them with considerable power so long as the festival lasted, and then, being intent on uniting economy with their generosity, they made these Asiarchs, as they were called, responsible for all the expenses incurred in the celebration of the games and diets. It was a clever policy, as it secured the maximum of contentment on the people's part with the minimum of expense to the imperial government. This arrangement clearly limited the position of the Asiarchate to rich men, as they alone could afford the enormous expenses involved. The Greeks, specially those of Asia, as we have already pointed out, were very flashy in their disposition. They loved titles and decorations;

so much so that one of their own orators of St. Paul's day, Dion Chrysostom, tells us that, provided they got a title, they would suffer any indignity. There were therefore crowds of rich men always ready to take the office of Asiarch, which by degrees was turned into a kind of life peerage, a man once an Asiarch always retaining the title, while his wife was called the Asiarchess, as we find from the inscriptions. The Asiarchs were, in fact, the official aristocracy of the province of Asia. They had assembled on this occasion for the purpose of sitting in the local parliament and presiding over the annual games in honour of Diana.[1] Their interests and their honour were all bound up with the worship of the goddess, and yet the preaching of St. Paul had told so powerfully upon the whole province, that even among the very officials of the State religion St. Paul had friends and supporters anxious to preserve his life, and therefore sent him a message not to adventure himself into the theatre. It is no wonder that Demetrius the silversmith roused his fellow-craftsmen into activity and fanned the flame of their wrath, for the worship of Diana of the Ephesians was indeed in danger when the very men whose office bound them to its support were in league with such an uncompromising opponent as this Paul of Tarsus. St. Luke thus gives a glimpse of the constitution of Ephesus and of the province of Asia in his time. He shows us the peculiar institution of the Asiarchate, and then when we turn to the inscriptions which Mr. Wood and other modern discoverers have

[1] These local parliaments under the Roman Empire have been the subject of much modern investigation at the hands of French and German scholars. See for references to the authorities on the point an article which I wrote in *Macmillan's Magazine* for 1882.

unearthed, we find that the Asiarchs occupy a most prominent position in them, vindicating in the amplest manner the introduction of them by St. Luke as assembled at Ephesus at this special season, and there interesting themselves in the welfare of the great Apostle.[1]

But now there comes on the scene another official, whose title and office have been the subject of many an illustration furnished by modern research. The Jews who followed the mob into the theatre, when they did not see St. Paul there, put forward one Alexander as their spokesman. This man has been by some identified with Alexander the coppersmith, to whom St. Paul refers (2 Tim. iv. 14) when writing to Timothy, then resident at Ephesus, as a man who had done much injury to the Christian cause. He may have been well known as a brother-tradesman by the Ephesian silversmiths, and he seems to have been regarded by the Jews as a kind of leader who might be useful in directing the rage of the mob against the Christians whom they hated. The rioters, however, did not distinguish as clearly as the Jews would have wished between the Christians and the Jews. They made the same mistake as the Romans did for more than a century later, and confounded Jews and Christians together. They were all, in any case, opponents of idol worship and chiefly of their favourite goddess, and therefore the sight of Alexander merely intensified their rage, so much that for the space of two hours they continued to vociferate their favourite cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

[1] See the index to Lightfoot's *Ignatius and Polycarp* for extended references to the Asiarchate, and also Mommsen's *Roman Provinces* (Dickson's translation), vol. i., pp. 345-7.

[2] The Ephesian mob four hundred years later displayed at the third General Council held at Ephesus in 431 an extraordinary power of

Now, however, there appeared another official, whose title and character have become famous through his action on this occasion: "When the town-clerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper (or Neocoros) of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?" Here we have several terms which have been illustrated and confirmed by the excavations of Mr. Wood. The town-clerk or recorder is introduced, because he was the chief executive officer of the city of Ephesus, and, as such, responsible to the Roman authorities for the peace and order of the city. The city of Ephesus was a free city, retaining its ancient laws and customs like Athens and Thessalonica, but only on the condition that these laws were effective and peace duly kept. Otherwise the Roman authorities and their police would step in. These town-clerks or recorders of Ephesus are known from this one passage in the Acts of the Apostles, but they are still better known from the inscriptions which have been brought to light at Ephesus. I have mentioned, for instance, the immense inscription which Mr. Wood discovered in the theatre commemorating the gift to the temple of Diana of a vast number of gold and silver images made by one Vibius Salutarius. This inscription lays down that the images should be kept in the custody of the town-clerk or recorder when not required for use in the

keeping up the same cry for hours. See the story of the Council as told by Hefele in the third volume of his *General Councils* (Clark's translation). Nothing will give such a vigorous idea of the confusion which then prevailed at Ephesus as a glance at Mansi's Acts of that Council. The cry "Anathema to Nestorius," the heretic against whom the Council declared, was maintained so long and so continuously that one would imagine that orthodoxy depended on strength of lungs.

solemn religious processions made through the city. The names of a great many town-clerks have been recovered from the ruins of Ephesus, some of them coming from the reign of Nero, the very period when this riot took place. It is not impossible that we may yet recover the very name of the town-clerk who gave the riotous mob this very prudent advice, "Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash," which has made him immortal. Then, again, a title for the city of Ephesus is used in this pacific oration which is strictly historical, and such as would naturally have been used by a man in the town-clerk's position. He calls Ephesus the "temple-keeper," or "Neocoros," as the word literally is, of the goddess Diana, and this is one of the most usual and common titles in the lately discovered inscriptions. Ephesus and the Ephesians were indeed so devoted to the worship of that deity and so affected by the honour she conferred upon them that they delighted to call themselves the temple-sweepers, or sextons, of the great Diana's temple. In fact, their devotion to the worship of the goddess so far surpassed that of ordinary cities that the Ephesians were accustomed to subordinate their reverence for the Emperors to their reverence for their religion, and thus in the decree passed by them honouring Vibius Salutarius who endowed their temple with many splendid gifts, to which we have already referred, they begin by describing themselves thus: "In the presidency of Tiberius Claudius Antipater Julianus, on the sixth day of the first decade of the month Poseideon, it was resolved by the Council and the Public Assembly of the Necori (of Artemis) and Lovers of Augustus." The Ephesians must have been profoundly devoted to Diana's worship when in that age of gross materialism

they would dare to place any deity higher than that of the reigning emperor, the only god in whom a true Roman really believed ; for unregenerate human nature at that time looked at the things alone which are seen and believed in nothing else.

The rest of the town-clerk's speech is equally deserving of study from every point of view. He gives us a glimpse of the Apostle's method of controversy: it was wise, courteous, conciliatory. It did not hurt the feelings or outrage the sentiments of natural reverence, which ought ever to be treated with the greatest respect, for natural reverence is a delicate plant, and even when directed towards a wrong object ought to be most gently handled. "Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.[1] If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another." Modern

[1] St. Paul's zeal never outran his discretion. He never blasphemed or spoke lightly of ideas and names held sacred by his hearers. I remember in our local ecclesiastical history an example of the opposite course which has often found imitators. When Charles Wesley first visited Dublin about the year 1747, he left behind a zealous but very unwise preacher to continue his work. His language was so violent that the mob were roused to burn his meeting-house, which stood in Marlborough Street near the spot where the Roman Catholic Cathedral now stands. He then took his stand on Oxmantown Green in the northern suburbs, where he preached in the open air. On Christmas Day he took the Incarnation as his subject, and began, as St. Paul never would have done, by crying aloud, "I curse and blaspheme all gods and goddesses in heaven and earth, save the Babe that was born in Bethlehem and was wrapped in swaddling clothes," whereupon the Dublin mob with their ready wit in the matter of nick-names called the Methodists swaddlers, a title which has ever since stuck to them in Ireland, and is to this day commonly used by the Roman Catholics. This seems an interesting illustration of the typical character of the Acts.

research has thrown additional light upon these words. The Roman system of provincial government anticipated the English system of assize courts, moving from place to place, introduced by Henry II. for the purpose of bringing justice home to every man's door.[1] It was quite natural for the proconsul of Asia to hold his court at the same time as the annual assembly of the province of Asia and the great festival of Diana. The great concourse of people rendered such a course specially convenient, while the presence of the proconsul helped to keep the peace, as, to take a well-known instance, the presence of Pontius Pilate at the great annual Paschal feast at Jerusalem secured the Romans against any sudden rebellion, and also enabled him to dispense justice after the manner of an assize judge, to which fact we would find an allusion in the words of St. Mark (xv. 6), "Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom they asked of him."

It has been said, indeed, that St. Luke here puts into the town-clerk's mouth words he could never have used, representing him as saying "there are proconsuls" when, in fact, there was never more than one proconsul in the province of Asia. Such criticism is of the weakest character. Surely every man that ever speaks in public knows that one of the commonest usages is to say there are judges or magistrates, using the plural when one judge or magistrate may alone be exercising jurisdiction! But there is another explanation, which completely solves the difficulty

[1] See Preface by Bishop Stubbs to Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta Regis Hen. II.*, t. ii., pp. lxv.-lxxi. (Rolls Series); Madox, *Hist. of Exchequer*, pp. 84-96, for an account of the rise of the English Assize System; see Le Blant, *Les Actes des Martyrs*, pp. 50-121, and *Marquardt's Röm. Staatsverwalt*, p. 365 about Roman assizes. There were eleven circuits in Asia.

and vindicates St. Luke's minute accuracy. Three hundred years ago John Calvin, in his commentary, noted the difficulty, and explained it by the supposition that the proconsul had appointed deputies or assessors who held the courts in his name. There is, however, a more satisfactory explanation. It was the reign of Nero, and his brutal example had begun to debauch the officials through the provinces. Silanus, the proconsul of Asia, was disliked by Nero and by his mother as a possible candidate for the imperial crown, being of the family of Augustus. Two of his subordinates, Celer and Ælius, the collectors of the imperial revenue in Asia, poisoned him, and as a reward were permitted to govern the province, enjoying perhaps in common the title of proconsul and exercising the jurisdiction of the office.[1] Finally, the tone of the town-clerk's words as he ends his address is thoroughly that of a Roman official. He feels himself responsible for the riot, and knows that he may be called upon to account for it. Peace was what the Roman authorities sought and desired at all hazards, and every measure which threatened the peace, or every organisation, no matter how desirable, a fire brigade even, which might conceivably be turned to purposes of political agitation, was strictly discouraged.

The correspondence of Pliny with the Emperor Trajan some fifty years or so later than this riot is the best commentary upon the town-clerk's speech. We find, for instance, in Pliny's *Letters*, Book X., No. 42, a letter telling about a fire which broke out in Nicomedia, the capital of Bithynia, of which province Pliny was proconsul. He wrote to the Emperor

[1] See Lewin's *St. Paul*, i. 337, 338.

describing the damage done, and suggesting that a fire brigade numbering one hundred and fifty men might be instituted. The Emperor would not hear of it, however. Such clubs or societies he considered dangerous, and so he wrote back a letter which proves how continuous was Roman policy, how abhorrent to the imperial authorities were all voluntary organisations which might be used for the purposes of public agitation: "You are of opinion that it would be proper to establish a company of fire-men in Nicomedia, agreeably to what has been practised in several other cities. But it is to be remembered that societies of this sort have greatly disturbed the peace of the province in general and of those cities in particular. Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purposes they may be founded, they will not fail to form themselves into factious assemblies, however short their meetings will be"; and so Pliny was obliged to devise other measures for the security and welfare of the cities committed to his charge.[1] The accidental burning of a city would not be attributed to him as a fault, while the occurrence of a street riot might be the beginning of a social war which would bring down ruin upon the Empire at large.

When the recorder of Ephesus had ended his speech he dismissed the assembly, leaving to us a precious record illustrative of the methods of Roman government, of the interior life of Ephesus in days long gone by, and, above all else, of the thorough honesty of the writer whom the Holy Spirit impelled to trace the earliest triumphs of the Cross amid the teeming fields of Gentile paganism.

[1] A similar jealousy of voluntary organisations is still perpetuated in France under the code Napoleon, which largely embodies Roman methods and ideas.

CHAPTER XVI.

ST. PAUL AND THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"And after the uproar was ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. . . . And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together (at Troas) to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. . . . And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears. . . . Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood."—ACTS xx. 1, 7, 17–19, 28.

THE period of St. Paul's career at which we have now arrived was full of life, vigour, activity. He was in the very height of his powers, was surrounded with responsibilities, was pressed with cares and anxieties; and yet the character of the sacred narrative is very peculiar. From the passover of the year 57, soon after which the Apostle had to leave Ephesus, till the pass over of the next year, we learn but very little of St. Paul's work from the narrative of St. Luke. The five verses with which the twentieth chapter begins tell us all that St. Luke apparently knew about the Apostle's actions during that time. He gives us the story of a mere outsider, who knew next to nothing of the work St. Paul was doing. The Apostle left Ephesus and

went into Macedonia, whence he departed into Greece. Three months were occupied in teaching at Corinth, and then, intending to sail from Cenchreæ to Ephesus, he suddenly changed his mind upon the discovery of a Jewish plot, altered his route, disappointed his foes, and paid a second visit to Macedonia. In this narrative, which is all St. Luke gives, we have the account, brief and concise, of one who was acquainted merely with the bare outlines of the Apostle's work, and knew nothing of his inner life and trials. St. Luke, in fact, was so much taken up with his own duties at Philippi, where he had been labouring for the previous five years, that he had no time to think of what was going on elsewhere. At any rate his friend and pupil Theophilus had simply asked him for a narrative so far as he knew it of the progress of the gospel. He had no idea that he was writing anything more than a story for the private use of Theophilus, and he therefore put down what he knew and had experienced, without troubling himself concerning other matters. I have read criticisms of the Acts—proceeding principally, I must confess, from German sources—which seem to proceed on the supposition that St. Luke was consciously writing an ecclesiastical history of the whole early Church which he knew and felt was destined to serve for ages.[1] But this was evidently not the case.

[1] I do not wish to decry the industry and learning of German critics, to whom I owe much, as my various references show; but I am always suspicious of their historical conclusions, simply because they are pure students, and are therefore ignorant of life and men. The more industrious and secluded a life a man may lead, so much the more ignorant of the practical world a man becomes, and so much the more unfitted to be a real historian, who must know men as well as books. History is a picture of real life in the past, and to paint it a man must know real life in the present. As well might we set an academic scientist who

St. Luke was consciously writing a story merely for a friend's study, and dreamt not of the wider fame and use destined for his book. This accounts in a simple and natural way, not only for what St. Luke inserts, but also for what he leaves out, and he manifestly left out a great deal. We may take this passage at which we have now arrived as an illustration of his methods of writing sacred history. This period of ten months, from the time St. Paul left Ephesus till he returned to Philippi at the following Easter season, was filled with most important labours which have borne fruit unto all ages of the Church, yet St. Luke dismisses them in a few words. Just let us realise what happened in these eventful months. St. Paul wrote First Corinthians in April A.D. 57. In May he passed to Troas, where, as we learn from Second Corinthians, he laboured for a short time with much success. He then passed into Macedonia, urged on by his restless anxiety concerning the Corinthian Church. In Macedonia he laboured during the following five or six months. How intense and absorbing must have been his work during that time! It was then that he preached the gospel with signs and wonders

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regarded all lines as straight and all bars as rigid to build the Forth Bridge, as set a man who knows nothing of human nature and how it acts under the stress of practical affairs to write the story of human life two thousand years ago. We may take and use German investigations, but we should apply English common sense and experience to test German conclusions. This rule is, I fear, too much forgotten in a great deal of the literature that is now being pawned off upon the English world in the name of criticism. Surely the fate of Baur's theories ought to be a warning to all young men against swallowing as the latest results of scholarship everything that comes clothed in the German language! The English nation has a reputation for solid common sense. What fools the Germans would be did they take everything English as full of common sense because printed in our language!

round about even unto Illyricum, as he notes in Romans xvi. 19, an epistle written this very year from Corinth. The last time that he had been in Macedonia he was a hunted fugitive fleeing from place to place. Now he seems to have lived in comparative peace, so far at least as the Jewish synagogues were concerned. He penetrated, therefore, into the mountainous districts west of Berœa, bearing the gospel tidings into cities and villages which had as yet heard nothing of them. But preaching was not his only work in Macedonia. He had written his first Epistle to Corinth from Ephesus a few months before. In Macedonia he received from Titus, his messenger, an account of the manner in which that epistle had been received, and so from Macedonia he despatched his second Corinthian Epistle, which must be carefully studied if we desire to get an adequate idea of the labours and anxieties amid which the Apostle was then immersed (see 2 Cor. ii. 13, and vii. 5 and 6). And then he passed into Greece, where he spent three months at Corinth, settling the affairs of that very celebrated but very disorderly Christian community. The three months spent there must have been a period of overwhelming business. Let us recount the subjects which must have taken up every moment of St. Paul's time. First there were the affairs of the Corinthian Church itself. He had to reprove, comfort, direct, set in order. The whole moral, spiritual, social, intellectual conceptions of Corinth had gone wrong. There was not a question, from the most elementary topic of morals and the social considerations connected with female dress and activities, to the most solemn points of doctrine and worship, the Resurrection and the Holy Communion, concerning which difficulties, disorders, and dissensions had not been raised. All these had

to be investigated and decided by the Apostle. Then, again, the Jewish controversy, and the oppositions to himself personally which the Judaising party had excited, demanded his careful attention. This controversy was a troublesome one in Corinth just then, but it was a still more troublesome one in Galatia, and was fast raising its head in Rome. The affairs of both these great and important churches, the one in the East, the other in the West, were pressing upon St. Paul at this very time. While he was immersed in all the local troubles of Corinth, he had to find time at Corinth to write the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Romans. How hard it must have been for the Apostle to concentrate his attention on the affairs of Corinth when his heart and brain were torn with anxieties about the schisms, divisions, and false doctrines which were flourishing among his Galatian converts, or threatening to invade the Church at Rome, where as yet he had not been able to set forth his own conception of gospel truth, and thus fortify the disciples against the attacks of those subtle foes of Christ who were doing their best to turn the Catholic Church into a mere narrow Jewish sect, devoid of all spiritual power and life.

But this was not all, or nearly all. St. Paul was at the same time engaged in organising a great collection throughout all the churches where he had ministered on behalf of the poor Christians at Jerusalem, and he was compelled to walk most warily and carefully in this matter. Every step he took was watched by foes ready to interpret it unfavourably; every appointment he made, every arrangement, no matter how wise or prudent, was the subject of keenest scrutiny and criticism. With all these various matters

accumulating upon him it is no wonder that St. Paul should have written of himself at this very period in words which vividly describe his distractions: "Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, the care of all the churches." And yet St. Paul gives us a glimpse of the greatness of his soul as we read the epistles which were the outcome of this period of intense but fruitful labour. He carried a mighty load, but yet he carried it lightly. His present anxieties were numerous, but they did not shut out all thoughts upon other topics. The busiest man then was just the same as the busiest man still. He was the man who had the most time and leisure to bestow thought upon the future. The anxieties and worries of the present were numerous and exacting, but St. Paul did not allow his mind to be so swallowed up in them as to shut out all care about other questions equally important. While he was engaged in the manifold cares which present controversies brought, he was all the while meditating a mission to Rome, and contemplating a journey still farther to Spain and Gaul,[1] and the bounds of the Western ocean. And then, finally, there was the care of St. Paul's own soul, the sustenance and development of his spirit by prayer and meditation and worship and reading, which he never neglected under any circumstances. All these things combined must have rendered this period of close upon twelve months one of the Apostle's busiest and intensest times, and yet St. Luke disposes of it in a few brief verses of this twentieth chapter.

[1] I say to Gaul, because I take it that he would have sailed to Marseilles, which was then the great port of communication with Asia Minor, as we have noted above, pp. 372-74, when treating of the worship of Diana and its extension from the East to Marseilles.

After St. Paul's stay at Corinth, he determined to proceed to Jerusalem according to his predetermined plan, bringing with him the proceeds of the collection which he had made. He wished to go by sea, as he had done some three years before, sailing from Cenchreæ direct to Syria. The Jews of Corinth, however, were as hostile as ever, and so they hatched a plot to murder him before his embarkation. St. Paul, however, having learned their designs, suddenly changed his route, and took his journey by land through Macedonia, visiting once more his former converts, and tarrying to keep the passover at Philippi with the little company of Christian Jews who there resided. This circumstance throws light upon verses 4 and 5 of this twentieth chapter, which run thus: "There accompanied him as far as Asia Sopater of Berœa, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas." St. Paul came to Philippi, found St. Luke there, celebrated the passover, and then sailed away with St. Luke to join the company who had gone before. And they had gone before for a very good reason. They were all, except Timothy, Gentile Christians, persons therefore who, unlike St. Paul, had nothing to do with the national rites and customs of born Jews, and who might be much more profitably exercised in working among the Gentile converts at Troas, free from any danger of either giving or taking offence in connexion with the passover, a lively instance of which danger Trophimus, one of their number, subsequently afforded in Jerusalem, when his presence alone in St. Paul's company caused the spread of a rumour which raised the riot so fatal to St. Paul's liberty:

"For they had seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple" (xxi. 29). This incident, together with St. Paul's conduct at Jerusalem as told in the twenty-sixth verse of the twenty-first chapter illustrates vividly St. Paul's view of the Jewish law and Jewish rites and ceremonies. They were for Jews national ceremonies. They had a meaning for them. They commemorated certain national deliverances, and as such might be lawfully used. St. Paul himself could eat the passover and cherish the feelings of a Jew, heartily thankful to God for the deliverance from Egypt wrought out through Moses centuries ago for his ancestors, and his mind could then go on and rejoice over a greater deliverance still wrought out at this same paschal season by a greater than Moses. St. Paul openly proclaimed the lawfulness of the Jewish rites for Jews, but opposed their imposition upon the Gentiles. He regarded them as *tolerabiles ineptiæ*, and therefore observed them to please his weaker brethren; but sent his Gentile converts on before, lest perhaps the sight of his own example might weaken their faith and lead them to a compliance with that Judaising party who were ever ready to avail themselves of any opportunity to weaken St. Paul's teaching and authority. St. Paul always strove to unite wisdom and prudence with faithfulness to principle lest by any means his labour should be in vain.

St. Luke now joined St. Paul at Philippi, and henceforth gives his own account of what happened on this eventful journey. From Philippi they crossed to Troas. It was the spring-time, and the weather was more boisterous than later in the year, and so the voyage took five days to accomplish, while two days had

sufficed on a previous occasion. They came to Troas, and there remained for a week, owing doubtless to the exigencies of the ship and its cargo. On the first day of the week St. Paul assembled the Church for worship. The meeting was held on what we should call Saturday evening; but we must remember that the Jewish first day began from sundown on Saturday or the Sabbath.[1] This is the first notice in the Acts of the observance of the Lord's day as the time of special Christian worship. We have, however, earlier notices of the first day in connexion with Christian observances. The apostles, for instance, met together on the first day, as we are told in John xx. 19, and again eight days after, as the twenty-sixth verse of the same chapter tells. St. Paul's first Epistle to Corinth was written twelve months earlier than this visit to Troas, and it expressly mentions (ch. xvi. 2) the first day of the week as the time ordered by St. Paul for the setting apart of the Galatian contribution to the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem; and so here again at Troas we see that the Asiatic Christians observed the same solemn time for worship and the celebration of the Eucharist. Such glimpses—chance notices, we might call them, were there not a higher Providence watching over the unconscious writer—show us how little we can conclude from mere silence about the ritual, worship, and government of the Apostolic Church,[2] and illustrate the vast importance of

[1] There is to this day a trace of this custom in the Book of Common Prayer in the rubric which prescribes that the collect for Sunday shall be said on Saturday evening. In colleges, too, according to Archbishop Laud's rules, surplices are worn on Saturday evenings as well as on Sundays.

[2] See above, pp. 342 and 361, where I have pointed out the dangerous character of the argument from mere silence. I may perhaps recur to the example of Meyer, the eminent textual critic, to illustrate my

studying carefully the extant records of the Christian Church in the second century if we wish to gain fresh light upon the history and customs of the apostolic age. If three or four brief texts were blotted out of the New Testament, it would be quite possible to argue from silence merely that the apostles and their immediate followers did not observe the Lord's Day in any way whatsoever, and that the custom of stated worship and solemn eucharistic celebrations on that day were a corruption introduced in post-apostolic times. The best interpreters of the New Testament are, as John Wesley long ago well pointed out in his preface to his celebrated but now almost unknown Christian Library, the apostolic fathers and the writers of the age next following the apostles.[1]

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view of German critics stated in my first note to this chapter, p. 386 above. Meyer is an exhaustive textual critic, but as soon as he ventures on the region of history he falls into this trap, and concludes from the argument of silence that Apollos was never baptized with Christian baptism because he was so clever and spiritually enlightened that he did not need it. But, then, how does he account for the case of St. Paul? Was Apollos superior to St. Paul? And yet he was baptized. But the illustrations of the fallacies of this method of argumentation would be endless. If the argument of silence is sufficient to prove a negative, what are we to do with female communicants? There is not a single instance of them in the New Testament. It is here, however, that the study of the second-century writers is so valuable as illustrating the silence of the first. See my note on p. 342 above.

[1] The Christian library was a series of fifty volumes which Wesley published for the use of his followers. They were begun in 1749 and completed in 1755. "The opening volume contains, 1. The Epistles of the apostolical fathers Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, whom he believed to be endued with the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit, and whose writings, though not of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures, are worthy of a much greater respect than any composures that have been made since. 2. The martyrdoms of Ignatius and Polycarp. 3. An extract from the Homilies of Macarius, born about the year 301." See Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 25, 65-67.

We may take it for a certain rule of interpretation that, whenever we find a widely established practice or custom mentioned in the writings of a Christian author of the second century, it originated in apostolic times. It was only natural that this should have been the case. We are all inclined to venerate the past, and to cry it up as the golden age. Now this tendency must have been intensified tenfold in the case of the Christians of the second century. The first century was the time of our Lord and the age of the apostles. Sacred memories clustered thick round it, and every ceremony and rite which came from that time must have been profoundly reverenced, while every new ceremony or custom must have been rudely challenged, and its author keenly scrutinised as one who presumptuously thought he could improve upon the wisdom of men inspired by the Holy Ghost and miraculously gifted by God. It is for this reason we regard the second-century doctors and apologists as the best commentary upon the sacred writers, because in them we see the Church of the apostolic age living, acting, displaying itself amid the circumstances and scenes of actual life.

Just let us take as an illustration the case of this observance of the first day of the week. The Acts of the Apostles tells us but very little about it, simply because there is but little occasion to mention what must have seemed to St. Luke one of the commonest and best-known facts. But Justin Martyr some eighty years later was describing Christianity for the Roman Emperor. He was defending it against the outrageous and immoral charges brought against it, and depicting the purity, the innocency, and simplicity of its sacred rites. Among other subjects dealt with, he touches

upon the time when Christians offered up formal and stated worship. It was absolutely necessary therefore for him to treat of the subject of the Lord's Day. In the sixty-seventh chapter of Justin's First *Apology*, we find him describing the Christian weekly festival in words which throw back an interesting light upon the language of St. Luke touching the Lord's Day which St. Paul passed at Troas. Justin writes thus on this topic: "Upon the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together unto one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen;[1] and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are

[1] Here we have an illustration of 1 Cor. xiv. 16: "Else if thou bless with the Spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" See also ch. lxv. of Justin's same *Apology* for another reference to the Amen, and cf. *Apost. Constitutions*, viii. 10; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.*, ch. v.; Euseb., *H. E.*, vi. 43 and vii. 9; Ambros. *De Sacrament.*, iv. 4; Jerom., *Epist.*, 62; Chrysost., *Hom.*, xxxv. on 1st Cor.; Bingham's *Antiqq.*, XV. iii. 26; and the article on Amen in the first volume of Smith's *Dict. Christ. Antiqq.* The preceding chapters of Justin's *Apology*, lxv. and lxvi., are full of information. They expressly state that in the Primitive Church no unbaptized person was allowed to communicate, an elementary point of Christian practice about which some persons and some Christian societies seem at present very uncertain. Hooker's words, *Eccles. Pol.*, Book V. ch. lxvii., are very clear on this topic.

absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And those who are well to do and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead." This passage gives us a full account of Christian customs in the first half of the second century, when thousands must have been still alive who remembered the times of the apostles, enabling us to realise what must have been the character of the assembly and of the worship in which St. Paul played a leading part at Troas.[1]

[1] The continuous character, the strong conservatism of the early Christian Church receives an interesting illustration from the history of the Sabbath as distinguished from the Lord's Day. The Jewish Church gave the outward form to Christianity; and though Christianity parted company with Judaism by the end of the first century, yet the sacred character of the Sabbath was still perpetuated among the Gentiles notwithstanding St. Paul's strong language in Galatians and Colossians. In the fourth century the Sabbath was observed in many places in the same manner as the Lord's Day. St. Athanasius says: "We meet on the Sabbath, not indeed being infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath." Timothy, one of his successors at Alexandria, says that the Holy Communion was administered on the Sabbath as on the Lord's Day, and that these two were the only days on which it was celebrated in that city. In the time of St. Chrysostom the two great weekly festivals were the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. It was the same in the fifth century in the Egyptian monasteries, where the services for Saturday and Sunday were exactly the same. See a full account of this matter in Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book XIII. ch. ix. sec. iii.

There was, however, a difference between the celebration at Troas and the celebrations of which Justin Martyr speaks, though we learn not of this difference from Justin himself, but from Pliny's letter to Trajan, concerning which we have often spoken. St. Paul met the Christians of Troas in the evening, and celebrated the Holy Communion with them about midnight. It was the first day of the week according to Jewish computation, though it was what we should call Saturday evening. The ship in which the apostolic company was travelling was about to sail on the morrow, and so St. Paul gladly joined the local church in its weekly breaking of bread. It was exactly the same here at Troas as reported by St. Luke, as it was at Corinth where the evening celebrations were turned into occasions of gluttony and ostentation, as St. Paul tells us in the eleventh of First Corinthians. The Christians evidently met at this time in the evening to celebrate the Lord's Supper. It has been often thought that St. Paul, having referred just twelve months before in the First Corinthian Epistle to the gross abuses connected with the evening celebrations at Corinth, and having promised to set the abuses of Corinth in order when he visited that church, did actually change the time of the celebration of Holy Communion from the evening to the morning, when he spent the three months there of which this chapter speaks.[1] Perhaps he did make the change, but we have no information on the point; and if he did make the change for Corinth, it is evident that he did not intend to impose it as a rule upon the whole Christian Church

[1] St. Augustine, in *Epist.*, cxviii., *Ad Januar.*, cc. vi. vii., was one of the first to suggest this idea. The passage is quoted by Bingham, *Antiqq.*, XV. vii. 8.

when a few weeks after leaving Corinth he celebrated the Lord's Supper at Troas in the evening. By the second century, however, the change had been made. Justin Martyr indeed does not give a hint as to the time when Holy Communion was administered in the passages to which we have referred. He tells us that none but baptized persons were admitted to partake of it, but gives us no minor details. Pliny, however, writing of the state of affairs in Bithynia,—and it bordered upon the province where Troas was situated,—tells us from the confession extracted out of apostate Christians that "the whole of their fault lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, *before it was light*, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by a sacrament (or oath) not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft or robbery or adultery." After this early service they then separated, and assembled again in the evening to partake of a common meal. The Agape or Love-Feast was united with the Holy Communion in St. Paul's day. Experience, however, showed that such a union must lead to grave abuses, and so in that final consolidation which the Church received during the last quarter of the first century, when the Lord's Second Coming was seen to be not so immediate as some at first expected, the two institutions were divided; the Holy Communion being appointed as the early morning service of the Lord's Day, while the Agape was left in its original position as an evening meal. And so have matters continued ever since. The Agape indeed has almost died out. A trace of it perhaps remains in the blessed bread distributed in Roman Catholic churches on the Continent; while again the love-feasts instituted by

John Wesley and continued among his followers were an avowed imitation of this primitive institution. The Agape continued indeed in vigorous existence for centuries, but it was almost always found associated with grave abuses. It might have been innocent and useful so long as Christian love continued to burn with the fervour of apostolic days, though even then, as Corinth showed, there were lurking dangers in it; but when we reach the fourth and fifth centuries we find council after council denouncing the evils of the Agape, and restricting its celebration with such effect that during the Middle Ages it ceased to exist as a distinctive Christian ordinance.[1] The change of the Holy Communion to the earlier portion of the day took almost universal effect, and that from the earliest times. Tertullian (*De Corona*, iii.) testifies that in his time the Eucharist was received before daybreak, though Christ had instituted it at a meal-time. Cyprian witnesses to the same usage in his sixty-third Epistle, where he speaks of Christ as instituting the Sacrament in the evening, that "the very hour of the sacrifice might intimate the evening of the world," but then describes himself as "celebrating the resurrection of the Lord in the morning."[2] St. Augustine, as quoted above, writing

[1] See the exhaustive article on Agapæ in Smith's *Dict. Christ. Antiqq.*, vol. i., p. 39.

[2] The early Christians celebrated the Holy Communion in memory of Christ's resurrection as much as in memory of His death. The resurrection of Christ was, in fact, the central point of their belief and thought. This alone would have conduced to the practice of early morning communion, even before day, inasmuch as it was at that time the resurrection took place. Cf. *Dict. Christ. Antiqq.*, vol. i., p. 419, on the hours of celebration of the Holy Communion. On p. 41 of the same volume the writer of the article on the Agapæ makes an extraordinary statement that it was only at the third Council of Carthage,

about 400, speaks of fasting communion as the general rule; so general, indeed, that he regards it as having come down from apostolic appointment. At the same time St. Augustine recognises the time of its original institution, and mentions the custom of the African Church which once a year had an evening communion on Thursday before Easter in remembrance of the Last Supper and of our Lord's action in connection with it. My own feeling on the matter is, that early fasting communion when there is health and strength is far the most edifying. There is an element of self-denial about it, and the more real self-denial there is about our worship the more blessed will that worship be. A worship that costs nothing in mind, body, or estate is but a very poor thing to offer unto the Lord of the universe. But there is no ground either in Holy Scripture or the history of the primitive Church justifying an attempt to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which they cannot bear and to teach that fasting communion is binding upon all Christians. St. Augustine speaks most strongly in a passage we have already referred to (*Epist.* cxviii., *Ad Januar.*) about the benefit of fasting communion; but he admits the lawfulness of non-fasting participation, as does also that great Greek divine St. Chrysostom, who quotes the examples of St. Paul and of our Lord Himself in justification of such a course.[1]

A.D. 391, that the time of Eucharistic celebration was changed to the morning, and that then the Agape was first separated from the Holy Communion. The change and the separation had taken place in Pliny's time, as I have already shown.

[1] This whole subject of fasting communion is discussed at length with all the authorities duly given in Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book XV. ch. vii. sec. 8, whence I have taken my references, and where he quotes Bishop Fell's Notes on Cyprian, *Epist.* lxiii. p. 156, who says that

The celebration of the Eucharist was not the only subject which engaged St. Paul's attention at Troas. He preached unto the people as well; and following his example we find from Justin Martyr's narrative that preaching was an essential part of the communion office in the days immediately following the apostles' age; and then, descending to lower times still, we know that preaching is an equally essential portion of the eucharistic service in the Western Church, the only formal provision for a sermon according to the English liturgy being the rubric in the service for the Holy Communion, which lays down that after the Nicene Creed, "Then shall follow the sermon or one of the Homilies already set forth, or hereafter to be set forth, by authority." St. Paul's discourse was no mere mechanical homily, however. He was not what man regarded as a powerful, but he was a ready speaker, and one who carried his hearers away by the rapt intense earnestness of his manner. His whole soul was full of his subject. He was convinced that this was his last visit to the churches of Asia. He foresaw too a thousand dangers to which they would be exposed after his departure, and he therefore prolonged his sermon far into the night, so far indeed that human nature asserted its claims upon a young man named Eutychus, who sat in a window of the room where they were assembled. Human nature indeed was never for a moment absent from these primitive Church assemblies. If it was absent in one shape, it was present in another, just as really as in our modern congregations, and so Eutychus fell fast asleep under the

"the custom of communicating after supper lasted for a long time in the Church": cf. Socrates, *H. E.*, v. 22, and the *Dict. Christ. Antiqq.* vol. i., p. 417, on *Fasting Reception of H. C.*

heart-searching exhortations of an inspired apostle, even as men fall asleep under less powerful sermons of smaller men; and as the natural result, sitting in a window left open for the sake of ventilation, he fell down into the courtyard, and was taken up apparently lifeless. St. Paul was not put out, however. He took interruptions in his work as the Master took them. He was not upset by them, but he seized them, utilised them, and then, having extracted the sweetness and blessedness which they brought with them, he returned from them back to his interrupted work. St. Paul descended to Eutychus, found him in a lifeless state, and then restored him. Men have disputed whether the Apostle worked a miracle on this occasion, or merely perceived that the young man was in a temporary faint. I do not see that it makes any matter which opinion we form. St. Paul's supernatural and miraculous powers stand on quite an independent ground, no matter what way we decide this particular case. It seems to me indeed from the language of St. Paul—"Make ye no ado; for his life is in him"—that the young man had merely fainted, and that St. Paul recognised this fact as soon as he touched him. But if any one has strong opinions on the opposite side I should be sorry to spend time disputing a question which has absolutely no evidential bearing. The great point is, that Eutychus was restored, that St. Paul's long sermon was attended by no fatal consequences, and that the Apostle has left us a striking example showing how that, with pastors and people alike, intense enthusiasm, high-strung interest in the affairs of the spiritual world, can enable human nature to rise superior to all human wants, and prove itself master even of the conquering powers of sleep: "And when he was gone

up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."

We know nothing of what the particular topics were which engaged St. Paul's attention at Troas, but we may guess them from the subject-matter of the address to the elders of Ephesus, which takes up the latter half of this twentieth chapter. Troas and Ephesus, in fact, were so near and so similarly circumstanced that the dangers and trials of both must have been much alike. He next passed from Troas to Miletus. This is a considerable journey along the western shore of Asia Minor. St. Paul was eagerly striving to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost, or by Whitsuntide, as we should say. He had left Philippi after Easter, and now there had elapsed more than a fortnight of the seven weeks which remained available for the journey to Jerusalem. How often St. Paul must have chafed against the manifold delays of the trading vessel in which he sailed; how frequently he must have counted the days to see if sufficient time remained to execute his purpose! St. Paul, however, was a rigid economist of time. He saved every fragment of it as carefully as possible. It was thus with him at Troas. The ship in which he was travelling left Troas early in the morning. It had to round a promontory in its way to the port of Assos, which could be reached direct by St. Paul in half the time. The Apostle therefore took the shorter route, while St. Luke and his companions embarked on board the vessel. St. Paul evidently chose the land route because it gave him a time of solitary communion with God and with himself. He felt, in fact, that the perpetual strain upon his spiritual nature demanded special spiritual support and refreshment,

which could only be obtained in the case of one who led such a busy life by seizing upon every such occasion as then offered for meditation and prayer. St. Paul left Troas some time on Sunday morning. He joined the ship at Assos, and after three days' coasting voyage landed at Miletus on Wednesday, whence he despatched a messenger summoning the elders of the Church of Ephesus to meet him.[1] The ship was evidently to make a delay of several days at Miletus. We conclude this from the following reason. Miletus is a town separated by a distance of thirty miles from Ephesus. A space therefore of at least two days would be required in order to secure the presence of the Ephesian elders. If a messenger—St. Luke, for instance—started immediately on St. Paul's arrival at Miletus, no matter how quickly he travelled, he could not arrive at Miletus sooner than Thursday at midday. The work of collecting the elders and making known to them the apostolic summons would take up the afternoon at least, and then the journey to Ephesus either by land or water must have occupied the whole of Friday. It is very possible that the sermon recorded in this twentieth of Acts was delivered on the Sabbath, which, as we have noted above, was as yet kept sacred by Christians as well as by Jews, or else upon the Lord's Day, when, as upon that day week at Troas, the elders of Ephesus had assembled with the Christians of Miletus in order to commemorate the Lord's resurrection.

[1] The *Lives of St. Paul* by Lewin and by Conybeare and Howson enter into minute computations as to the days of the month upon which the Apostle touched at the various towns mentioned in the Acts. I can now merely refer the reader to these works for such details about St. Paul's life, as they scarcely come within the scope of an expositor's duty.

We have already pointed out that we know not the subject of St. Paul's sermon at Troas, but we do know the topics upon which he enlarged at Miletus, and we may conclude that, considering the circumstances of the time, they must have been much the same as those upon which he dwelt at Troas. Some critics have found fault with St. Paul's sermon as being quite too much taken up with himself and his own vindication. But they forget the peculiar position in which St. Paul was placed, and the manner in which the truth of the gospel was then associated in the closest manner with St. Paul's own personal character and teaching. The Apostle was just then assailed all over the Christian world wherever he had laboured, and even sometimes where he was only known by name, with the most frightful charges; ambition, pride, covetousness, deceit, lying, all these things and much more were imputed to him by his opponents who wished to seduce the Gentiles from that simplicity and liberty in Christ into which he had led them. Corinth had been desolated by such teachers; Galatia had succumbed to them; Asia was in great peril. St. Paul therefore, foreseeing future dangers, warned the shepherds of the flock at Ephesus against the machinations of his enemies, who always began their preliminary operations by making attacks upon St. Paul's character. This sufficiently explains the apologetic tone of St. Paul's address, of which we have doubtless merely a brief and condensed abstract indicating the subjects of a prolonged conversation with the elders of Ephesus, Miletus, and such neighbouring churches as could be gathered together. We conclude that St. Paul's conference on this occasion must have been a long one for this reason. If St. Paul could find matter sufficient to engage his attention for a whole

night, from sundown till sunrise, in a place like Troas, where he had laboured but a very short time, how much more must he have found to say to the presbyters of the numerous congregations which must have been flourishing at Ephesus where he had laboured for years with such success as to make Christianity a prominent feature in the social and religious life of that idolatrous city!

Let us now notice some of the topics of this address. It may be divided into four portions. The first part is retrospective, and autobiographical; the second is prospective, and sets forth his conception of his future course; the third is hortatory, expounding the dangers threatening the Ephesian Church; and the fourth is valedictory.

I. We have the biographical portion. He begins his discourse by recalling to the minds of his hearers his own manner of life,—"Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews"; words which show us that from the earliest portion of his ministry at Ephesus, and as soon as they realised the meaning of his message, the Jews had become as hostile to the Apostle at Ephesus as they had repeatedly shown themselves at Corinth, again and again making attempts upon his life. The foundations indeed of the Ephesian Church were laid in the synagogue during the first three months of his work, as we are expressly told in ch. xix. 8; but the Ephesian Church must have been predominantly Gentile in its composition, or else the language of Demetrius must have been exaggerated and the riot raised by him meaningless.

How could Demetrius have said, "Ye see that at Ephesus this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands," unless the vast majority of his converts were drawn from the ranks of those pagans who worshipped Diana? These words also show us that during his extended ministry at Ephesus he was left at peace by the heathen. St. Paul here makes no mention of trials experienced from pagan plots. He speaks of the Jews alone as making assaults upon his work or his person, incidentally confirming the statement of ch. xix. 23, that it was only when he was purposing to retire from Ephesus, and during the celebration of the Artemisian games which marked his last days there, that the opposition of the pagans developed itself in a violent shape.

St. Paul begins his address by fixing upon Jewish opposition outside the Church as his great trial at Ephesus, just as the same kind of opposition inside the Church had been his great trial at Corinth, and was yet destined to be a source of trial to him in the Ephesian Church itself, as we can see from the Pastoral Epistles. He then proceeds to speak of the doctrines he had taught and how he had taught them; reminding them "how that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." St. Paul sets forth his manner of teaching. He taught publicly, and public teaching was most effective in his case, because he came armed with a double power, the powers of spiritual and of intellectual preparation. St. Paul was not a man who thought that prayer and

spiritual life could dispense with thought and mental culture. Or again, he would be the last to tolerate the idea that diligent visitation from house to house would make up for the neglect of that public teaching which he so constantly and so profitably practised. Public preaching and teaching, pastoral visitation and work, are two distinct branches of labour, which at various periods of the Church's history have been regarded in very different lights. St. Paul evidently viewed them as equally important, the tendency in the present age is, however, to decry and neglect preaching and to exalt pastoral work—including under that head Church services—out of its due position. This is, indeed, a great and lamentable mistake. The "teaching publicly" to which St. Paul refers is the only opportunity which the majority of men possess of hearing the authorised ministers of religion, and if the latter neglect the office of public preaching, and think the fag end of a week devoted to external and secular labours and devoid of any mental study and preparation stirring the soul and refreshing the spirit, to be quite sufficient for pulpit preparation, they cannot be surprised if men come to despise the religion that is presented in such a miserable light and by such inefficient ambassadors.[1]

St. Paul insists in this passage on the publicity and boldness of his teaching. There was no secrecy about

[1] I do not think there is any greater want in the Church of England than the revival of preaching. It is simply lamentable to see the numbers who under usual circumstances will walk out of church before the sermon, and still more lamentable to see the number of men who do not go to church at all. This I attribute to the low estate to which the ordinary sermon has fallen. In the days of evangelical supremacy the pulpit may have been unduly exalted; now it is unduly neglected, and with terrible results.

him, no hypocrisy; he did not come pretending one view or one line of doctrine, and then, having stolen in secretly, teaching a distinct system. In this passage, which may seem laudatory of his own methods, St. Paul is, in fact, warning against the underhand and hypocritical methods adopted by the Judaising party, whether at Antioch, Galatia, or Corinth. In this division of his sermon St. Paul then sets forth the doctrines which were the sum and substance of the teaching which he had given both publicly and from house to house. They were repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and that not only in the case of the Jews, but also of the Greeks. Now here we shall miss the implied reference of St. Paul, unless we emphasize the words "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable." His Judaising opponents thought there were many other things profitable for men besides these two points round which St. Paul's teaching turned. They regarded circumcision and Jewish festivals, washings and sacrifices, as very necessary and very profitable for the Gentiles; while, as far as the Jews were concerned, they thought that the doctrines on which St. Paul insisted might possibly be profitable, but were not at all necessary. St. Paul impresses by his words the great characteristic differences between the Ebionite view of Christ and of Christianity and that catholic view which has regenerated society and become a source of life and light to the human race.[1]

[1] I think I hear in St. Paul's words in this passage an echo of the Epistle to the Romans which he had written a month or two previously. The idea, "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," as the essence of Christianity is the central idea of that Epistle.

II. We have, then, the prospective portion of his discourse. St. Paul announces his journey to Jerusalem, and professes his ignorance of his fate there. He was warned merely by the testimony of the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions were his portion in every city. He was prepared for them, however, and for death itself, so that he might accomplish the ministry with which the Lord Jesus Christ had put him in trust. He concluded this part of his address by expressing his belief that he would never see them again. His work among them was done, and he called them to witness that he was pure from the blood of all men, seeing that he had declared unto them the whole counsel of God. This passage has given rise to much debate, because of St. Paul's statement that he knew that he should never see them again, while the Epistles to Timothy and that to Titus prove that after St. Paul's first imprisonment, with the notice of which this book of the Acts ends, he laboured for several years in the neighbourhood of Asia Minor, and paid lengthened visits to Ephesus.

We cannot now bestow space in proving this point, which will be found fully discussed in the various Lives of St. Paul which we have so often quoted: as, for instance, in Lewin, vol. ii., p. 94, and in Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii., p. 547. We shall now merely indicate the line of proof for this. In the Epistle to Philemon, ver. 22, written during his first Roman imprisonment, and therefore years subsequent to this address, he indicates his expectation of a speedy deliverance from his bonds, and his determination to travel eastward to Colossæ, where Philemon lived (cf. Philippians i. 25, ii. 24). He then visited Ephesus, where he left Timothy, who had been his companion in the latter

portion of his Roman imprisonment (cf. Philem. 1 and 1 Tim. i. 3), expecting soon to return to him in the same city (1 Tim. iii. 14); while again in 2 Tim. i. 18 he speaks of Onesiphorus having ministered to himself in Ephesus, and then in the same Epistle (ch. iv. 20), written during his second Roman imprisonment, he speaks of having just left Trophimus at Miletus sick. This brief outline, which can be followed up in the volumes to which we have referred, and especially in Appendix II. in Conybeare and Howson on the date of the Pastoral Epistles, must suffice to prove that St. Paul was expressing a mere human expectation when he told the Ephesian elders that he should see their faces no more. St. Luke, in fact, thus shows us that St. Paul was not omniscient in his knowledge, and that the inspiration which he possessed did not remove him, as some persons think, out of the category of ordinary men or free him from their infirmities. The Apostle was, in fact, supernaturally inspired upon occasions. The Holy Ghost now and again illuminated the darkness of the future when such illumination was necessary for the Church's guidance; but on other occasions St. Paul and his brother apostles were left to the guidance of their own understandings and to the conclusions and expectations of common sense, else why did not St. Peter and St. John read the character of Ananias and Sapphira or of Simon Magus before their sins were committed? why did St. Peter know nothing of his deliverance from Herod's prison-house before the angel appeared, when his undissembled surprise is sufficient evidence that he had no expectation of any such rescue? These instances, which might be multiplied abundantly out of St. Paul's career and writings, show us that St. Paul's confident statement in

this passage was a mere human anticipation which was disappointed by the course of events. The supernatural knowledge of the apostles ran on precisely the same lines as their supernatural power. God bestowed them both for use according as He saw fit and beneficial, but not for common ordinary every-day purposes, else why did St. Paul leave Trophimus at Miletus sick, or endure the tortures of his own ophthalmia, or exhort Timothy to take a little wine on account of his bodily weakness, if he could have healed them all by his miraculous power? Before we leave this point we may notice that here we have an incidental proof of the early date of the composition of the Acts. St. Luke, as we have often maintained, wrote this book about the close of St. Paul's first imprisonment. Assuredly if he had written it at a later period, and above all, if he wrote it twenty years later, he would have either modified the words of his synopsis of St. Paul's speech, or else given us a hint that subsequent events had shown that the Apostle was mistaken in his expectations, a thing which he could easily have done, because he cherished none of these extreme notions about St. Paul's office and dignity which have led some to assume that it was impossible for him ever to make a mistake about the smallest matters.[1]

III. This discourse, again, is hortatory, and its exhortations contain very important doctrinal statements. St. Paul begins this third division with an exhortation like that which our Lord gave to His apostles under the same circumstances, "Take heed unto yourselves." The Apostle never forgot that an effective ministry of souls must be based on deep personal knowledge

[1] See on this point Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to New Testament*, 4th ed., p. 445.

of the things of God. He knew, too, from his own experience that it is very easy to be so completely taken up with the care of other men's souls and the external work of the Church, as to forget that inner life which can only be kept alive by close communion with God. Then, having based his exhortations on their own spiritual life, he exhorts the elders to diligence in the pastoral office: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood." St. Paul in these words shows us his estimate of the ministerial office. The elders of Ephesus had been all ordained by St. Paul himself with the imposition of hands, a rite that has ever been esteemed essential to ordination. It was derived from the Jewish Church, and was perpetuated into the Christian Church by that same spirit of conservatism, that law of continuity which in every department of life enacts that everything shall continue as it was unless there be some circumstance to cause an alteration.[1] Now there was no cause for alteration in this case; nay, rather there was every reason to bring about a continuance of this custom, because imposition of hands indicates for the people the persons ordained, and assures the ordained themselves that they have been individually chosen and set apart. But St. Paul by

[1] This rule or law is the principle of Butler's great argument for a future life in the first chapter of his *Analogy*. He expressly states in the following words, "There is in every case a probability that things will continue as we experience they are, in all respects, except those in which we have some reason to think they will be altered. This is that kind of presumption of probability from analogy expressed in the word continuance which seems our only natural reason for believing the course of the world will continue to-morrow as it has done so far back as our experience or knowledge of history can carry us back."

these words teaches us a higher and nobler view of the ministry. He teaches us that he was himself but the instrument of a higher power, and that the imposition of hands was the sign and symbol to the ordained that the Holy Ghost had chosen them and appointed them to feed the flock of God. St. Paul here shows that in ordination, as in the sacraments, we should by faith look away beyond and behind the human instrument, and view the actions of the Church of Christ as the very operations and manifestations in the world of time and sense of the Holy Ghost Himself, the Lord and Giver of life. He teaches the Ephesian elders, in fact, exactly what he taught the Corinthian Church some few months earlier, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves" (2 Cor. iv. 7); the treasure and the power were everything, the only things, in fact, worth naming, the earthen vessels which contained them for a little time were nothing at all. How awful, solemn, heart-searching a view of the ministerial office this was! How sustaining a view when its holders are called upon to discharge functions for which they feel themselves all inadequate in their natural strength! Is it any wonder that the Church, taking the same view as St. Paul did, has ever held and taught that the ministerial office thus conferred by supernatural power is no mere human function to be taken up or laid down at man's pleasure, but is a life-long office to be discharged at the holder's peril,—a savour of life unto life for the worthy recipient, a savour of death unto death for the unworthy and the careless.

In connexion with this statement made by St. Paul concerning the source of the ministry we find a title

given to the Ephesian presbyters round which much controversy has centred. St. Paul says, "Take heed unto the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you *bishops*." I do not, however, propose to spend much time over this topic, as all parties are now agreed that in the New Testament the term presbyter and bishop are interchangeable and applied to the same persons.[1] The question to be decided is not about a

[1] Irenæus, however, writing in the second century, states that the bishops and presbyters of Ephesus and the neighbouring cities were assembled at Miletus, so that he distinguishes between bishops and presbyters even on this occasion: see his work *Against Heresies*, iii. 14. Dr. Hatch had an extraordinary theory, which he elaborates in his article "Priest" in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, vol. ii., p. 1700. He thus states it: "Whether the institution of Presbyters existed in the first instance outside the limits of the Judæo-Christian communities is doubtful. There is no evidence that it did so; the presumption is that it did not, for when St. Paul, writing to the churches which were presumably non-Jewish in their character, recognises the existence of church officers, he designates them by other names: προϊστάμενοι (1 Thess. v. 12), ἐπίσκοποι (Philip. i. 1)." To put it briefly, his idea is that bishop as a title was confined to predominantly Greek communities, and presbyter as a title was confined to predominantly Gentile communities. Will this theory and the instances he gives stand the test of facts? Philippi was, he thinks, a predominantly Gentile Church, so thoroughly Gentile that its members would necessarily prefer titles drawn from impure pagan sources rather than from Judaism. But was Philippi so thoroughly Gentile? If so, why did St. Paul stay there and celebrate the days of unleavened bread and the passover, as we have above noted? A large element in the church must have been Jewish when this happened. Again, take Thessalonica. We have already noted that the majority of that church must have been Gentile in origin; but there must have been a large and influential minority Jewish by race in a town where the Jews were so large an element in the population. Again, we find the title presbyter applied to the church officials of Ephesus. Dr. Hatch on the same page enumerates Ephesus among the Judæo-Christian communities, one, therefore, which would presumably prefer Jewish titles for its clergy. But was it predominantly Gentile? St. Paul laboured three months in the synagogue at Ephesus, and was then expelled. He laboured

name, but about an office, whether, in fact, any persons succeeded in apostolic times to the office of rule and government exercised by St. Paul and the rest of the apostles, as well as by Timothy, Titus, and the other delegates of the Apostle, and whether the term bishop, as used in the second century, was applied to such successors of the apostles.[1] This, however, is not a

there for two years among the Gentiles with such success, that Demetrius describes him as having turned away all Asia from Diana's worship. Surely if ever there was a Gentile Christian Church it was Ephesus! (Cf. Ephes. ii. and iii., where the Gentile character of the Ephesian Church is expressly asserted.) Yet here we have the title presbyter in use. Dr. Hatch's is not scientific historical reasoning, but the exercise of what Bishop Butler well designates, that delusive faculty called man's imagination and fancy. Upon this whole question of the origin of Christian presbyters, I may notice an exhaustive Biblical inquiry, called "The Ruling Elder," by the Rev. Robert King of Ballymena, the learned author of a well-known Irish Church History. It appeared after this chapter was written.

[1] In the second century bishops were often called presbyters, though presbyters were not called bishops, or, to quote Bishop Lightfoot, "Essay on the Ministry," *Philippians*, p. 226: "In the language of Irenæus, a presbyter is never designated a bishop, while on the other hand he very frequently speaks of a bishop as a presbyter." This usage long continued in the Church. Cyprian often expresses himself thus: cf. article on word "Senior" in *Dict. Christ. Antiqq.* Many instances of it occur in the literature of the early Celtic Church in Ireland, which was an offshoot of the Gallican Church and, through Gaul, of the Church of Western Asia Minor. In fact, this custom of calling bishops seniors or presbyters was used in Ireland till the twelfth century: see Ussher's Works, Ed. Elrington, vi. 517, 528. St. Bernard, for instance, in his Life of St. Malachy, calls the Bishop of Lismore "Senior Lesmorensis." I do not, as I have said, propose to enter any further into the debateable subject of Church government; but as I have come across this passage, and as I have already announced that I am writing this commentary as a decided Churchman, I may be permitted to state my own views, as history seems to me to set them forth, without entering into any discussion on the point. During the apostolic age the terms bishop and presbyter were interchangeable. As the apostles passed away, they seem to me to have established

question which comes directly within the purview of an expositor of the Acts of the Apostles, as the appointment of Timothy and Titus to manage the affairs of the Church in Ephesus and in Crete lies beyond the period covered by the text of the Acts, and properly belongs to the commentary on the Pastoral Epistles. St. Paul's words in this connexion have, however, an important bearing on fundamental doctrinal questions connected with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul speaks of the presbyters as called "to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." These words are very strong, so strong indeed that various readings have been put forward to mitigate their force. Some have read "Lord" instead of "God," others have substituted Christ for it; but the Revised Version, following the text of Westcott and Hort, have accepted the strongest form of the verse on purely critical ground, and translates it as "the

Episcopacy as the normal rule of the Church, though, doubtless, it was only by degrees that the title of bishop was appropriated to the office so created. By the time of Ignatius, that is, about 110 A.D., this appropriation was complete. As regards my authority for saying the apostles established Episcopacy, I simply appeal to Irenæus, who, in his great work against Heresies, Book III., ch. iii., states in section i. that "the apostles instituted bishops in the churches," and then in sec. 3 proceeds to trace the line of these bishops in the Roman Church, beginning with Linus, "into whose hands the blessed apostles committed the office of the Episcopate." Now it is upon Irenæus we largely depend for the proof of the canon of the New Testament and the Johannine origin of the Fourth Gospel. Surely if Irenæus is a witness sufficient to establish the apostolic origin of the Gospels, he should be quite sufficient to establish the apostolic origin of Episcopacy! If Irenæus is a competent witness to the true authorship of an anonymous document like the Fourth Gospel, he is surely competent to tell us of the true origin of a worldwide institution like Episcopacy. It is assuredly much easier to learn the origin of institutions than of documents.

Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." This passage, then, is decisive as to the Christological views of St. Luke and the Pauline circle generally. They believed so strongly in the deity of Jesus Christ and His essential unity with the Father that they hesitated not to speak of His sacrifice on Calvary as a shedding of the blood of God, an expression which some fifty years afterwards we find in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, where St. Ignatius speaks of them as "kindled into living fire by the blood of God," and a hundred years later still, in Tertullian, *Ad Uxor.*, ii. 3. This passage has been used in scientific theology as the basis of a principle or theory called the "Communicatio Idiomatum," a theory which finds an illustration in two other notable passages of Scripture, St. John iii. 13 and 1 Cor. ii. 8. In the former passage our Lord says of Himself, "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," where the Son of man is spoken of as in heaven as well as upon earth at the same time, though the Son of man, according to His humanity, could only be in one place at a time. In the second passage St. Paul says, "Which none of the rulers of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory," where crucifixion is attributed to the Lord of Glory, a title derived from His Divine nature. Now the term "Communicatio Idiomatum," or "transference of peculiar properties," is given to this usage because in all these texts the properties of the nature pertaining either to God or to man are spoken of as if they belonged to the other; or, to put it far better in the stately language of Hooker, v. liii. where he speaks of "those cross and circulatory speeches wherein there are attributed to

God such things as belong to manhood, and to man such as properly concern the deity of Jesus Christ, the cause whereof is the association of natures in one subject. A kind of mutual commutation there is, whereby those concrete names, God and man, when we speak of Christ, do take interchangeably one another's room, so that for truth of speech it skilleth not whether we say that the Son of God hath created the world and the Son of man by His death hath saved it, or else that the Son of man did create and the Son of God die to save the world." This is a subject of profound speculative and doctrinal interest, not only in connexion with the apostolic view of our Lord's Person, but also in reference to the whole round of methodised and scientific theology. We cannot, however, afford further space for this subject. We must be content to have pointed it out as an interesting topic of inquiry, and, merely referring the reader to Hooker and to Liddon's Bampton Lectures (Lect. V.) for more information, must hurry on to a conclusion. St. Paul terminates this part of his discourse with expressing his belief in the rapid development of false doctrines and false guides as soon as his repressive influence shall have been removed; a belief which the devout student of the New Testament will find to have been realised when in 1 Tim. i. 20, in 2 Tim. i. 15, and ii. 17, 18 he finds the Apostle warning the youthful Bishop of Ephesus against Phygelus and Hermogenes, who had turned all Asia away from St. Paul, and against Hymenæus, Philetus, and Alexander, who had imbibed the Gnostic error concerning matter, which had already led the Corinthians to deny the future character of the Resurrection. St. Paul then terminates his discourse with a solemn commendation of the Ephesian elders to

that Divine grace which is as necessary for an apostle as for the humblest Christian. He exhorts them to self-sacrifice and self-denial, reminding them of his own example, having supported himself and his companions by his labour as a tentmaker at Ephesus, and above all of the words of the Lord Jesus, which they apparently knew from some source which has not come down to us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

When the Apostle had thus terminated his address, which doubtless was a very lengthened one, he knelt down, probably on the shore, as we shall find him kneeling in the next chapter (xxi. 5, 6) on the shore at Tyre. He then commended them in solemn prayer to God, and they all parted in deep sorrow on account of the final separation which St. Paul's words indicated as imminent; for though the primitive Christians believed in the reality of the next life with an intensity of faith of which we have no conception, and longed for its peace and rest, yet they gave free scope to those natural affections which bind men one to another according to the flesh and were sanctified by the Master Himself when He wept by the grave of Lazarus. Christianity is not a religion of stoical apathy, but of sanctified human affections.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PRISONER IN BONDS.

"Having found a ship crossing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail. . . . We sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unload her burden. . . . When we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. . . . Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. . . . But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people."—ACTS xxi. 2, 3, 17, 33, 39, 40.

"And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. . . . But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty, wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down, and set him before them."—ACTS xxii. 22, 30.

"And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and with an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul."—ACTS xxiv. 1.

"And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence."—ACTS xxvi. 1.

THE title we have given to this chapter, "A Prisoner in Bonds," expresses the central idea of the last eight chapters of the Acts. Twenty years and more had now elapsed since St. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. These twenty years had been times of unceasing and intense activity. Now we come to some five years when the external labours, the turmoil and the cares of active life, have to be put aside,

and St. Paul was called upon to stand apart and learn the lesson which every-day experience teaches to all,—how easily the world can get along without us, how smoothly God's designs fulfil themselves without our puny assistance. The various passages we have placed at the head of this chapter cover six chapters of the Acts, from the twenty-first to the twenty-sixth. It may seem a large extent of the text to be comprised within the limits of one of our chapters, but it must be remembered that a great deal of the space thus included is taken up with the narrative of St. Paul's conversion, which is twice set forth at great length, first to the multitude from the stairs of the tower of Antonia, and then in his defence which he delivered before Agrippa and Bernice and Festus, or else with the speeches delivered by him before the assembled Sanhedrin and before Felix the governor, wherein he dwells on points previously and sufficiently discussed.[1] We have already considered the narrative of the Apostle's conversion at great length, and noted the particular directions in which St. Paul's own later versions at Jerusalem and Cæsarea throw light upon St. Luke's independent account. To the earlier chapters of this book we therefore would refer the reader who wishes to discuss St. Paul's conversion, and several of the other subjects which he introduces. Let us now, however, endeavour, first of all, to gather up into one connected story the tale of St. Paul's journeys, sufferings, and imprisonments from the time he left Miletus after his famous address till he set sail for Rome from the port of Cæsarea, a prisoner destined for the judg-

[1] Thus in ch. xxiv. 10-16 he enlarges upon the subject of "the Way which they call a sect," a topic and a name fully discussed above on pp. 32, 33.

ment-seat of Nero. This narrative will embrace from at least the summer of A.D. 58, when he was arrested at Jerusalem, to the autumn of 60, when he set sail for Rome. This connected story will enable us to see the close union of the various parts of the narrative which is now hidden from us because of the division into chapters, and will enable us to fix more easily upon the leading points which lend themselves to the purposes of an expositor.

I. St. Paul after parting from the Ephesian Church, embarked on board his ship, and then coasted along the western shore of Asia Minor for three days, sailing amid scenery of the most enchanting description, specially in that late spring or early summer season at which the year had then arrived. It was about the first of May, and all nature was bursting into new life, when even hearts, the hardest and least receptive of external influences, feel as if they were living a portion of their youth over again. And even St. Paul, rapt away in the contemplation of things unseen, must have felt himself touched by the beauty of the scenes through which he was passing, though St. Luke tells us nothing but the bare succession of events. Three days after leaving Miletus the sacred company reached Patara, a town at the south-western corner of Asia Minor, where the coast begins to turn round towards the east. Here St. Paul found a trading ship sailing direct to Tyre and Palestine, and therefore with all haste transferred himself and his party into it. The ship seems to have been on the point of sailing, which suited St. Paul so much the better, anxious as he was to reach Jerusalem in time for Pentecost. The journey direct from Patara to Tyre is about three hundred and fifty miles, a three days'

sail under favourable circumstances for the trading vessels of the ancients, and the circumstances were favourable. The north-west wind is to this day the prevailing wind in the eastern Mediterranean during the late spring and early summer season, and the north-west wind would be the most favourable wind for an ancient trader almost entirely depending on an immense main sail for its motive power. With such a wind the merchantmen of that age could travel at the rate of a hundred to a hundred and fifty miles a day, and would therefore traverse the distance between Patara and Tyre in three days, the time we have specified. When the vessel arrived at Tyre St. Paul sought out the local Christian congregation. The ship was chartered to bring a cargo probably of wheat or wine to Tyre, inasmuch as Tyre was a purely commercial city, and the territory naturally belonging to it was utterly unable to furnish it with necessary provisions, as we have already noted on the occasion of Herod Agrippa's death. A week, therefore, was spent in unloading the cargo, during which St. Paul devoted himself to the instruction of the local Christian Church. After a week's close communion with this eminent servant of God, the Tyrian Christians, like the elders of Ephesus and Miletus, with their wives and children accompanied him till they reached the shore, where they commended one another in prayer to God's care and blessing. From Tyre he sailed to Ptolemais, thirty miles distant. There again he found another Christian congregation, with whom he tarried one day, and then leaving the ship proceeded by the great coast road to Cæsarea, a town which he already knew right well, and to which he was so soon to return as a prisoner in bonds. At Cæsarea there must now have been a very

considerable Christian congregation. In Cæsarea Philip the Evangelist lived and ministered permanently. There too resided his daughters, eminent as teachers, and exercising in their preaching or prophetical functions a great influence among the very mixed female population of the political capital of Palestine. St. Paul and St. Luke abode in Cæsarea several days in the house of Philip the Evangelist. He did not wish to arrive in Jerusalem till close on the Feast of Pentecost, and owing to the fair winds with which he had been favoured he must have had a week or more to stay in Cæsarea. Here Agabus again appears upon the scene. Fourteen years before he had predicted the famine which led St. Paul to pay a visit to Jerusalem when bringing up the alms of the Antiochene Church to assist the poor brethren at Jerusalem, and now he predicts the Apostle's approaching captivity. The prospect moved the Church so much that the brethren besought St. Paul to change his mind and not enter the Holy City. But his mind was made up, and nothing would dissuade him from celebrating the Feast as he had all along proposed. He went up therefore to Jerusalem, lodging with Mnason, "an early disciple," as the Revised Version puts it, one therefore who traced his Christian convictions back probably to the celebrated Pentecost a quarter of a century earlier, when the Holy Ghost first displayed His supernatural power in converting multitudes of human souls. Next day he went to visit James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, who received him warmly, grasped his position, warned him of the rumours which had been industriously and falsely circulated as to his opposition to the Law of Moses, even in the case of born Jews, and gave him some prudent advice as to his course of action.

St. James recommended that St. Paul should unite himself with certain Christian Nazarites, and perform the Jewish rites usual in such cases. A Nazarite, as we have already mentioned, when he took the Nazarite vow for a limited time after some special deliverance vouchsafed to him, allowed his hair to grow till he could cut it off in the Temple, and have it burned in the fire of the sacrifices offered up on his behalf. These sacrifices were very expensive, as will be seen at once by a reference to Numbers vi. 13-18, where they are prescribed at full length, and it was always regarded as a mark of patriotic piety when any stranger coming to Jerusalem offered to defray the necessary charges for the poorer Jews, and thus completed the ceremonies connected with the Nazarite vow. St. James advised St. Paul to adopt this course, to unite himself with the members of the local Christian Church who were unable to defray the customary expenses, to pay their charges, join with them in the sacrifices, and thus publicly proclaim to those who opposed him that, though he differed from them as regards the Gentiles, holding in that matter with St. James himself and with the apostles, yet as regards the Jews, whether at Jerusalem or throughout the world at large, he was totally misrepresented when men asserted that he taught the Jews to reject the Law of Moses. St. Paul was guided by the advice of James, and proceeded to complete the ceremonial prescribed for the Nazarites. This was the turning-point of his fate. Jerusalem was then thronged with strangers from every part of the world. Ephesus and the province of Asia, as a great commercial centre, and therefore a great Jewish resort, furnished a very large contingent.[1] To these, then,

[1] See Lightfoot's *Ignatius*, vol. i., p. 452, upon the presence of Jews

Paul was well known as an enthusiastic Christian teacher, toward whom the synagogues of Ephesus felt the bitterest hostility. They had often plotted against him at Ephesus, as St. Paul himself told the elders in his address at Miletus, but had hitherto failed to effect their purpose. Now, however, they seemed to see their chance. They thought they had a popular cry and a legal accusation under which he might be done to death under the forms of law. These Ephesian Jews had seen him in the city in company with Trophimus, an uncircumcised Christian, belonging to their own city, one therefore whose presence within the temple was a capital offence, even according to Roman law.[1] They raised a cry therefore that he had defiled the Holy Place by bringing into it an uncircumcised Greek; and thus roused the populace to seize the Apostle, drag him from the sacred precincts, and murder him. During the celebration of the Feasts the Roman sentinels, stationed upon the neighbouring tower of Antonia which overlooked the Temple courts, watched the assembled crowds most narrowly, apprehensive of

in the towns and cities of Proconsular Asia. Antiochus the Great transported two thousand Jewish families to these parts from Babylonia and Mesopotamia.

[1] Inscriptions, according to Josephus, were graven in Greek and Latin on stones fixed in a wall or balustrade which ran round the Temple, warning the Gentiles not to enter on pain of death: see Josephus, *Wars*, V. v. 2; *Antiqq.*, XV. xi. 5. One of these stones was discovered some twenty years ago by M. Clermont Ganneau, with the inscription intact. It had been buried in the ground on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, where this learned Frenchman discovered it. A transcript of it can now be seen in Lewin's *St. Paul*, ii. 133. The inscription literally translated runs thus: "No alien to pass within the balustrade round the Temple and the inclosure. Whosoever shall be caught (so doing) must blame himself for the death that will ensue." This stone must often have been read by our Lord and His apostles, as they frequented the temple.

a riot. As soon therefore as the first symptoms of an outbreak occurred, the alarm was given, the chief captain Lysias hurried to the spot, and St. Paul was rescued for the moment. At the request of the Apostle, who was being carried up into the castle, he was allowed to address the multitude from the stairs. They listened to the narrative of his conversion very quietly till he came to tell of the vision God vouchsafed to him in the Temple some twenty years before, warning him to leave Jerusalem, when at the words "Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles," all their pent-up rage and pride and national jealousy burst forth anew. St. Paul had been addressing them in the Hebrew language which the chief captain understood not, and the mob probably expressed their rage and passion in the same language. The chief captain ordered St. Paul to be examined by flogging to know why they were so outrageous against him. More fortunate, however, on this occasion than at Philippi, he claimed his privilege as a Roman citizen, and escaped the torture. The chief captain was still in ignorance of the prisoner's crime, and therefore he brought him the very next day before the Sanhedrin, when St. Paul by a happy stroke caused such a division between the Sadducees and Pharisees that the chief captain was again obliged to intervene and rescue the prisoner from the contending factions. Next day, however, the Jews formed a conspiracy to murder the Apostle, which his nephew discovered and revealed to St. Paul and to Claudius Lysias, who that same night despatched him to Cæsarea.[1]

All these events, from his conference with James

[1] It is very curious how perpetually St. Paul escaped the plots of the

to his arrival under guard at Cæsarea, cannot have covered more than eight days at the utmost, and yet the story of them extends from the middle of the twenty-first chapter to the close of the twenty-third, while the record of twelve months' hard work preaching, writing, organising is embraced within the first six verses of the twentieth chapter, showing how very different was St. Luke's narrative of affairs, according as he was present or absent when they were transacted.[1]

From the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter to the close of the twenty-sixth is taken up with the account of St. Paul's trials, at first before Felix, and then before Festus, his successor in the procuratorship of Palestine. Just let us summarise the course of events and distinguish between them. St. Paul was despatched by Claudius Lysias to Felix accompanied by a letter in which he contrives to put the best construction on his own actions, representing himself as specially anxious about St. Paul because he was a Roman citizen, on which account indeed he describes himself as rescuing him from the clutches of the mob. After the lapse of five days St. Paul was brought up before Felix and accused by the Jews of three serious crimes in the eyes of Roman law as administered in Palestine. First, he was a mover of seditions among the Jews;[2] second, a ringleader of a new sect, the

Jews at Corinth, Ephesus, and elsewhere. At Corinth the plot formed was revealed as it would seem just as he was about to go on board his vessel (ch. xx. 3). Doubtless there were concealed Christians to whose ears the plots came and by whom they were revealed.

[1] See Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, pp. 314-16, for an elaborate account of each day's proceedings, and a discussion of the various problems, chronological and otherwise, which they raise.

[2] The Romans were always afraid of Jewish seditions. Seven years

Nazarenes, unknown to Jewish law; and third, a profaner of the Temple, contrary to the law which the Romans themselves had sanctioned. On all these points Paul challenged investigation and demanded proof, asking where were the Jews from Asia who had accused him of profaning the Temple. The Jews doubtless thought that Paul was a common Jew who would be yielded up to their clamour by the procurator, and knew nothing of his Roman citizenship. Their want of witnesses brought about their failure, but did not lead to St. Paul's release. He was committed to the custody of a centurion, and freedom of access was granted to his friends. In this state St. Paul continued two full years, from midsummer 58 to the same period of A.D. 60, when Felix was superseded by Festus. During these two years Felix often conversed with St. Paul. Felix was a thoroughly bad man. He exercised, as a historian of that time said of him, "the power of a king with the mind of a slave." He was tyrannical, licentious, and corrupt, and hoped to be bribed by St. Paul when he would have set him at liberty. At this period of his life St. Paul twice came in contact with the Herodian house which thenceforth disappears from sacred history. Felix about the period of St. Paul's arrest enticed Drusilla, the great-granddaughter of

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before St. Paul's imprisonment there had been a terrible outburst, in which Ananias the high priest had been himself involved, and which led to the despatch of Felix himself as procurator. He had effectually put down all disturbances, which led to the prolongation of his rule in Palestine for the very unusual period of eight years, from 52 to 60 A.D. This accounts for the words of Tertullus (ch. xxiv. 2): "Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation." See Lewin's *Fasti*, pp. 296-98, 315, 320; Conybeare and Howson, ch. xxii.; and for the latest authority, Schürer's *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, i. 477-83, ii. 170 (Leipzig, 1886).

Herod the Great, from her husband through the medium as many think, of Simon Magus. Drusilla was very young and very beautiful, and, like all the Herodian women, very wicked.[1] Felix was an open adulterer, therefore, and it is no wonder that when Paul reasoned before the guilty pair concerning righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, conscience should have smitten them and Felix should have trembled. St. Paul had another opportunity of bearing witness before this wicked and bloodstained family. Festus succeeded Felix as procurator of Palestine about June A.D. 60. Within the following month Agrippa II., the son of the Herod Agrippa who had died the terrible death at Cæsarea of which the twelfth chapter tells, came to Cæsarea to pay his respects unto the new governor. Agrippa was ruler of the kingdom of Chalcis, a district north of Palestine and about the Lebanon Range. He was accompanied by his sister Bernice, who afterwards became the mistress of Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem in the last great siege. Festus had already heard St. Paul's case, and had allowed his appeal unto Cæsar. He wished, however, to have his case investigated before two Jewish experts, Agrippa and Bernice, who could instruct his own ignorance on the charges laid against him by the Jews, enabling him to write a more satisfactory report for the Emperor's guidance. He brought St. Paul therefore before them, and gave the great Christian champion another opportunity of bearing witness for his Master before a family which now for more than sixty years had been more or less mixed up, but never for their own blessing, with Christian history. After a period

[1] Drusilla perished with her child by this union with Felix in the famous eruption of Vesuvius A.D. 79.

of two years and three months' detention, varied by different public appearances, St. Paul was despatched to Rome to stand his trial and make his defence before the Emperor Nero, whose name has become a synonym for vice, brutality, and self-will.

II. We have now given a connected outline of St. Paul's history extending over a period of more than two years. Let us omit his formal defences, which have already come under our notice, and take for our meditation a number of points which are peculiar to the narrative.

We have in the story of the voyage, arrest, and imprisonment of St. Paul, many circumstances which illustrate God's methods of action in the world, or else His dealings with the spiritual life. Let us take a few instances. First, then, we direct attention to the steady though quiet progress of the Christian faith as revealed in these chapters. St. Paul landed at Tyre, and from Tyre he proceeded some thirty miles south to Ptolemais, These are both of them towns which have never hitherto occurred in our narrative as places of Christian activity. St. Paul and St. Peter and Barnabas and the other active leaders of the Church must often have passed through these towns, and wherever they went they strove to make known the tidings of the gospel. But we hear nothing in the Acts, and tradition tells us nothing of when or by whom the Christian Church was founded in these localities.[1]

We get glimpses, too, of the ancient organisation of the Church, but only glimpses; we have no complete statement, because St. Luke was writing for a man who lived amidst it, and could supply the gaps which his in-

[1] See my remarks in the next chapter on the case of the church at Puteoli, which St. Paul found flourishing there on his voyage to Rome.

formant left. The presbyters are mentioned at Miletus, and Agabus the prophet appeared at Antioch years before, and now again he appears at Cæsarea, where Philip the Evangelist and his daughters the prophetesses appear. Prophets and prophesying are not confined to Palestine and Antioch, though the Acts tells us nothing of them as existing elsewhere. The Epistle to Corinth shows us that the prophets occupied a very important place in that Christian community. Prophesying indeed was principally preaching at Corinth; but it did not exclude prediction, and that after the ancient Jewish method, by action as well as by word, for Agabus took St. Paul's girdle, and binding his own hands and feet declared that the Holy Ghost told him, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."[1] But how little we know of the details of the upgrowth of the Church in all save the more prominent places! How entirely ignorant we are, for instance, of the methods by which the gospel spread to Tyre and Ptolemais and Puteoli! Here we find in the Acts the fulfilment of our Lord's words as reported in St. Mark iv. 26: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; . . . and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how." It was with the last and grander temple of God as it was with the first. Its foundations were laid, and its walls were built, not with sound of axe and hammer,

[1] This prophecy was not literally fulfilled. The Jews did not bind St. Paul, nor deliver him into Gentile hands. The Romans took him out of Jewish hands, and bound him for their own purposes. The Jews, however, brought this binding about, and were the cause of his captivity in Roman hands. On the question of prophets and prophesying in the primitive Church, see Dr. Salmon's article on Hermas, in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. ii., pp. 916-19.

but in the penitence of humbled souls, in the godly testimony of sanctified spirits, in the earnest lives of holy men hidden from the scoffing world, known only to the Almighty.

Again, we notice the advice given by James and the course actually adopted by St. Paul when he arrived at Jerusalem. It has the appearance of compromise of truth, and yet it has the appearance merely, not the reality of compromise. It was in effect wise and sound advice, and such as teaches lessons useful for our own guidance in life. We have already set forth St. Paul's conception of Jewish rites and ceremonies. They were nothing in the world one way or another, as viewed from the Divine standpoint. Their presence did not help on the work of man's salvation; their absence did not detract from it. The Apostle therefore took part in them freely enough, as when he celebrated the passover and the days of unleavened bread at Philippi, viewing them as mere national rites.[1] He had been successful in the very highest degree in converting to this view even the highest and strictest members of the Jerusalem Church. St. James, in advising St. Paul how to act on this occasion, when such prejudices had been excited against him, clearly shows that he had come round to St. Paul's view. He tells St. Paul that the multitude or body of the Judæo-Christian Church at Jerusalem had been excited against him, because they

[1] St. Paul, writing twelve months earlier than his arrest, expressly lays down this principle in 1 Corinthians vii. 18-20: "Was any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called."

had been informed that he taught the Jews of the Dispersion to forsake Moses, the very thing St. Paul did not do. St. James grasped, however, St. Paul's view that Moses and the Levitical Law might be good things for the Jews, but had no relation to the Gentiles, and must not be imposed on them. St. James had taught this view ten years earlier at the Apostolic Council. His opinions and teaching had percolated downwards, and the majority of the Jerusalem Church now held the same view as regards the Gentiles, but were as strong as ever and as patriotic as ever so far as the Jews were concerned, and the obligation of the Jewish Law upon them and their children. St. Paul had carried his point as regards Gentile freedom. And now there came a time when he had in turn to show consideration and care for Jewish prejudices, and act out his own principle that circumcision was nothing and uncircumcision was nothing. Concessions, in fact, were not to be all on one side, and St. Paul had now to make a concession. The Judæo-Christian congregations of Jerusalem were much excited, and St. Paul by a certain course of conduct, perfectly innocent and harmless, could pacify their excited patriotic feelings, and demonstrate to them that he was still a true, a genuine, and not a renegade Jew. It was but a little thing that St. James advised and public feeling demanded. He had but to join himself to a party of Nazarites and pay their expenses, and thus Paul would place himself *en rapport* with the Mother Church of Christendom. St. Paul acted wisely, charitably, and in a Christlike spirit when he consented to do as St. James advised. St. Paul was always eminently prudent. There are some religious men who seem to think that to advise a wise or prudent course is all the same

as to advise a wicked or unprincipled course. They seem to consider success in any course as a clear evidence of sin, and failure as a proof of honesty and true principle. Concession, however, is not the same as unworthy compromise. It is our duty in life tc see and make our course of conduct as fruitful and as successful as possible. Concession on little points has a wondrous power in smoothing the path of action and gaining true success. Many an honest man ruins a good cause simply because he cannot distinguish, as St. Paul did, things necessary and essential from things accidental and trivial. Pig-headed obstinacy, to use a very homely but a very expressive phrase, which indeed is often only disguised pride, is a great enemy to the peace and harmony of societies and churches. St. Paul displayed great boldness here. He was not afraid of being misrepresented, that ghost which frightens so many a popularity hunter from the course which is true and right. How easily his fierce opponents, the men who had gone to Corinth and Galatia to oppose him, might misrepresent his action in joining himself to the Nazarites! They were the extreme men of the Jerusalem Church. They were the men for whom the decisions of the Apostolic Council had no weight, and who held still as of old that unless a man be circumcised he could not be saved. How easily, I say, these men could despatch their emissaries, who should proclaim that their opponent Paul had conceded all their demands and was himself observing the law at Jerusalem. St. Paul was not afraid of this misrepresentation, but boldly took the course which seemed to him right and true, and charitable, despite the malicious tongues of his adversaries. The Apostle of the Gentiles left us an example which many still require.

How many a man is kept from adopting a course that is charitable and tends to peace and edification, solely because he is afraid of what opponents may say, or how they may twist and misrepresent his action. St. Paul was possessed with none of this moral cowardice which specially flourishes among so-called party-leaders, men who, instead of leading, are always led and governed by the opinions of their followers.[1] St. Paul simply determined in his conscience what was right, and then fearlessly acted out his determination.

Some persons perhaps would argue that the result of his action showed that he was wrong and had unworthily compromised the cause of Christian freedom. They think that had he not consented to appear as a Nazarite in the Temple no riot would have occurred, his arrest would have been avoided, and the course of history might have been very different. But here we would join issue on the spot. The results of his action vindicated his Christian wisdom. The great body of the Jerusalem Church were convinced of his sincerity and realised his position. He maintained his

[1] We see enough of this in politics. We see it in the Church as well. Writing as one with nearly a quarter of a century's experience of a disestablished, and therefore of a popularly governed Church, I have seen a great deal of this tendency in ecclesiastical matters. Prominent and ambitious men are ever apt to fall into the snare here noted. The tendency of popular assemblies is ever to develop a class of men who will have but little backbone, and will be always ready to rectify their convictions to suit their constituencies. "Show thou me the way I should walk in," but in a very different sense from the Psalmist's, is the unuttered prayer of their lives, addressed to the popular audiences of whose opinions they are the mere expressions, not the guides. For such men this typical history has many a reproof in St. Paul's brave conduct upon this and every other occasion. He was never afra'd of a little temporary misrepresentation, and therefore he proved a real guide to the Church of his own and of every age.

influence over them, which had been seriously imperilled previously, and thus helped on the course of development which had been going on. Ten years before the advocates of Gentile freedom were but a small body. Now the vast majority of the local church at Jerusalem held fast to this idea, while still clinging fast to the obligation laid upon the Jews to observe the law. St. Paul did his best to maintain his friendship and alliance with the Jerusalem Church. To put himself right with them he travelled up to Jerusalem, when fresh fields and splendid prospects were opening up for him in the West. For this purpose he submitted to several days restraint and attendance in the Temple, and the results vindicated his determination. The Jerusalem Church continued the same course of orderly development, and when, ten years later, Jerusalem was threatened with destruction, the Christian congregations alone rose above the narrow bigoted patriotism which bound the Jews to the Holy City. The Christians alone realised that the day of the Mosaic Law was at length passed, and, retiring to the neighbouring city of Pella, escaped the destruction which awaited the fanatical adherents of the Law and the Temple.[1]

Another answer, too, may be made to this objection. It was not his action in the matter of the Nazarites that brought about the riot and the arrest and his consequent imprisonment. It was the hostility of the Jews of Asia; and they would have assailed him whenever and wherever they met him. Studying the matter too even in view of results, we should draw the opposite conclusion. God Himself approved his course. A Divine

[1] See Eusebius, *H. E.*, iii. 5, and the notes of Valesius on that passage.

vision was vouchsafed to him in the guard-room of Antonia, after he had twice experienced Jewish violence, and bestowed upon him the approbation of Heaven: "The night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer; for as thou hast testified concerning Me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." His courageous and at the same time charitable action was vindicated by its results on the Jerusalem Church, by the sanction of Christ Himself, and lastly, by its blessed results upon the development of the Church at large in leading St. Paul to Rome, in giving him a wider and more influential sphere for his efforts, and in affording him leisure to write epistles like those to Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossæ, which have been so instructive and useful for the Church of all ages.

Another point which has exercised men's minds is found in St. Paul's attitude and words when brought before the Sanhedrin on the day after his arrest. The story is told in the opening verses of the twenty-third chapter. Let us quote them, as they vividly present the difficulty: "And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? And Paul said, I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people."

Two difficulties here present themselves. (*a*) There is St. Paul's language, which certainly seems wanting

in Christian meekness, and not exactly modelled after the example of Christ, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and laid down in His Sermon on the Mount a law of suffering to which St. Paul does not here conform. But this is only a difficulty for those who have formed a superhuman estimate of St. Paul against which we have several times protested, and against which this very book of the Acts seems to take special care to warn its readers. If people will make the Apostle as sinless and as perfect as our Lord, they will of course be surprised at his language on this occasion. But if they regard him in the light in which St. Luke portrays him, as a man of like passions and infirmities with themselves, then they will feel no difficulty in the fact that St. Paul's natural temper was roused at the brutal and illegal command to smite a helpless prisoner on the mouth because he had made a statement which a member of the court did not relish. This passage seems to me not a difficulty, but a divinely guided passage witnessing to the inspiring influence of the Holy Ghost, and inserted to chasten our wandering fancy which would exalt the Apostle to a position equal to that which rightly belongs to his Divine Master alone.

(*b*) Then there is a second difficulty. Some have thought that St. Paul told a lie in this passage, and that, when defending himself from the charge of unscriptural insolence to the high priest, he merely pretended ignorance of his person, saying, "I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest." The older commentators devised various explanations of this passage. Dr. John Lightfoot, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, treating of this verse, sums them all up as follows. Either St. Paul means that he did not recognise Ananias as high priest

because he did not lawfully occupy the office, or else because that Christ was now the only high priest; or else because there had been so many and so frequent changes that as a matter of fact he did not know who was the actual high priest. None of these is a satisfactory explanation. Mr. Lewin offers what strikes me as the most natural explanation, considering all the circumstances. Ananias was appointed high priest about 47, continued in office till 59, and was killed in the beginning of the great Jewish war. He was a thoroughly historical character, and his high priesthood is guaranteed for us by the testimony of Josephus, who tells us of his varied fortunes and of his tragic death. But St. Paul never probably once saw him, as he was absent from Jerusalem, except for one brief visit all the time while he enjoyed supreme office.

Now the Sanhedrin consisted of seventy-one judges, they sat in a large hall with a crowd of scribes and pupils in front of them, and the high priest, as we have already pointed out (vol. i., p. 181), was not necessarily president or chairman. St. Paul was very short-sighted, and the ophthalmia under which he continually suffered was probably much intensified by the violent treatment he had experienced the day before. Could anything be more natural than that a short-sighted man should not recognise in such a crowd the particular person who had uttered this very brief, but very tyrannical command, "Smite him on the mouth"? Surely an impartial review of St. Paul's life shows him ever to have been at least a man of striking courage, and therefore one who would never have descended to cloke his own hasty words with even the shadow of an untruth![1]

[1] There is no necessity to adopt forced and unnatural explanations

Again, the readiness and quickness of St. Paul in seizing upon every opportunity of escape have important teaching for us. Upon four different occasions at this crisis he displayed this characteristic. Let us note them for our guidance. When he was rescued by the chief captain and was carried into the castle, the captain ordered him to be examined by scourging to elicit the true cause of the riot, St. Paul then availed himself of his privilege as a Roman citizen to escape that torture. When he stood before the council he perceived the old division between the Pharisees and the Sadducees to be still in existence, which he had known long ago when he was himself connected with it. He skilfully availed himself of that circumstance to raise dissension among his opponents. He grasped the essential principle which lay at the basis of his teaching, and that was the doctrine of the Resurrection and the assertion of the reality of the spiritual world. Without that doctrine Christianity and Christian teaching was utterly meaningless, and in that doctrine Pharisees and Christians were united. Dropping the line of defence he was about to offer, which probably would have proceeded to show how true to conscience and to Divine light had been his course of life, he cried out, "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Grotius, an old and learned commentator, dealing with ch. xxiii. 6, has well summed up the principles

when an easy one lies ready to our hand, and we all have daily experience how hard it is for even a keen-sighted man to distinguish among a crowd the person who utters a brief exclamation; a fact which the debates in the House of Commons often illustrate. I can myself quite appreciate St. Paul's difficulty. I am extremely short-sighted, and am never able to discern—say in a meeting of one of our synods—who it is that interrupts or contradicts me.

on which St. Paul acted on this occasion in the following words: "St. Paul was not lacking in human prudence, making use of which for the service of the gospel, he intermingled the wisdom of the serpent with the gentleness of the dove, and thus utilised the dissensions of his enemies." Yet once more we see the same tact in operation. After the meeting of the Sanhedrin and his rescue from out of its very midst, a plot was formed to assassinate him, of which he was informed by his nephew. Then again St. Paul did not let things slide, trusting in the Divine care alone. He knew right well that God demanded of men of faith that they should be fellow-workers with God and lend Him their co-operation. He knew too the horror which the Roman authorities had of riot and of all illegal measures; he despatched his nephew therefore to the chief captain, and by his readiness of resource saved himself from imminent danger. Lastly, we find the same characteristic trait coming out at Cæsarea. His experience of Roman rule taught him the anxiety of new governors to please the people among whom they came. He knew that Festus would be anxious to gratify the Jewish authorities in any way he possibly could. They were very desirous to have the Apostle transferred from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, sure that in some way or another they could there dispose of him. Knowing therefore the dangerous position in which he stood, St. Paul's readiness and tact again came to his help. He knew Roman law thoroughly well. He knew that as a Roman citizen he had one resource left by which in one brief sentence he could transfer himself out of the jurisdiction of Sanhedrin and Procurator alike, and of this he availed himself at the critical moment, pronouncing the magic words *Cæsarem Appello*

("I appeal unto Cæsar"). St Paul left in all these cases a healthy example which the Church urgently required in subsequent years. He had no morbid craving after suffering or death. No man ever lived in a closer communion with his God, or in a more steadfast readiness to depart and be with Christ. But he knew that it was his duty to remain at his post till the Captain of his salvation gave a clear note of withdrawal, and that clear note was only given when every avenue of escape was cut off. St. Paul therefore used his knowledge and his tact in order to ascertain the Master's will and discover whether it was His wish that His faithful servant should depart or tarry yet awhile for the discharge of his earthly duties. I have said that this was an example necessary for the Church in subsequent ages. The question of flight in persecution became a very practical one as soon as the Roman Empire assumed an attitude definitely hostile to the Church. The more extreme and fanatical party not only refused to take any measures to secure their safety or escape death, but rather rushed headlong upon it, and upbraided those as traitors and renegades who tried in any way to avoid suffering.[1] From the earliest times, from the days of Ignatius of Antioch himself, we see this morbid tendency displaying itself; while the Church in the person of several of its greatest leaders—men like Polycarp

[1] Any reader who wishes to see how this question was discussed about the year 200 A.D. should turn to Tertullian's treatise *De Fuga in Persecutione*, c. 6., in his works translated in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library, vol. i., p. 364, where Tertullian admits that the apostles fled in time of persecution, but argues that the permission to do so was merely temporary and personal to the apostles. The study of Church history is specially useful in showing us how exactly the same tendencies emerge in ancient and modern schisms and sects. Tertullian would have been a Quietist had he lived in the seventeenth century; see note 2, p. 446.

and Cyprian, who themselves retired from impending danger till the Roman authorities discovered them—showed that St. Paul's wiser teaching and example were not thrown away.[1] Quietism was a view which two centuries ago made a great stir both in England and France, and seems embodied to some extent in certain modern forms of thought. It taught that believers should lie quite passive in God's hands and make no effort for themselves. Quietism would never have found a follower in the vigorous mind of St. Paul, who proved himself through all those trials and vicissitudes of more than two years ever ready with some new device wherewith to meet the hatred of his foes.[2]

III. We notice lastly in the narrative of St. Paul's imprisonment his interviews with and his testimony before the members of the house of Herod. St. Peter had experience of the father of Herod Agrippa, and now St. Paul comes into contact with the children, Agrippa, Drusilla and Bernice. And thus it came about. Felix the procurator, as we have already explained, was a very bad man, and had enticed Drusilla from her husband.

[1] St. Ignatius of Antioch was very desirous of martyrdom. St. Polycarp fifty years avoided it till he was arrested. St. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, iv. 16, 17, condemns the suicidal passion for martyrdom. St. Cyprian, enthusiastic as he was, retired like Polycarp till escape was impossible. These holy men all acted like St. Paul. They waited till God had intimated His will by shutting up all way of escape. The story of Polycarp has an interesting warning against presumptuous rushing upon trials. Quintus, one of St. Polycarp's flock, gave himself up to death. His courage failed him at the last, and he became an apostate: see on this subject Lightfoo *Ignatius and Polycarp*, vol. i., pp. 38, 393, 603.

[2] Quietism, Jansenism, and Quakerism were all manifestations of the same spirit, and arose about the same time. Molinos was the founder of Quietism in Spain. A concise account of the movement will be found in Schaff's *Theological Encyclopædia* in connexion with the names of Molinos and Guyon.

He doubtless told her of the Jewish prisoner who lay a captive in the city where she was living. The Herods were a clever race, and they knew all about Jewish hopes and Messianic expectations, and they ever seem to have been haunted by a certain curiosity concerning the new sect of the Nazarenes. One Herod desired for a long time to see Jesus Christ, and was delighted when Pilate gratified his longing. Drusilla, doubtless, was equally curious, and easily persuaded her husband to gratify her desire. We therefore read in ch. xxiv. 24, "But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus."

Neither of them calculated on the kind of man they had to do with. St. Paul knew all the circumstances of the case. He adapted his speech thereto. He made a powerful appeal to the conscience of the guilty pair. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, and beneath his weighty words Felix trembled. His convictions were roused. He experienced a transient season of penitence, such as touched another guilty member of the Herodian house who feared John and did many things gladly to win his approval. But habits of sin had grasped Felix too firmly. He temporised with his conscience. He put off the day of salvation when it was dawning on him, and his words, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call thee unto me," became the typical language of all those souls for whom procrastination, want of decision, trifling with spiritual feelings, have been the omens and the causes of eternal ruin.

But Felix and Drusilla were not the only members

of the Herodian house with whom Paul came in contact. Felix and Drusilla left Palestine when two years of St. Paul's imprisonment had elapsed. Festus, another procurator, followed, and began his course, as all the Roman rulers of Palestine began theirs. The Jews, when Felix visited Jerusalem, besought him to deliver the prisoner lying bound at Cæsarea to the judgment of their Sanhedrin. Festus, all powerful as a Roman governor usually was, dared not treat a Roman citizen thus without his own consent, and when that consent was asked Paul at once refused, knowing right well the intentions of the Jews, and appealed unto Cæsar. A Roman governor, however, would not send a prisoner to the judgment of the Emperor without stating the crime imputed to him. Just at that moment Herod Agrippa, king of Chalcis and of the district of Ituræa, together with his sister Bernice, appeared on the scene. He was a Jew, and was well acquainted therefore with the accusations brought against the Apostle, and could inform the procurator what report he should send to the Emperor. Festus therefore brought Paul before them, and gave him another opportunity of expounding the faith of Jesus Christ and the law of love and purity which that faith involved to a family who ever treated that law with profound contempt. St. Paul availed himself of that opportunity. He addressed his whole discourse to the king, and that discourse was typical of those he addressed to Jewish audiences. It was like the sermon delivered to the Jews in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia in one important aspect. Both discourses gathered round the resurrection of Jesus Christ as their central idea. St. Paul began his address before Agrippa with that doctrine, and he ended with the same. The hope of Israel, towards

which their continuous worship tended, was the resurrection of the dead. That was St. Paul's opening idea. The same note lay beneath the narrative of his own conversion, and then he returned back to his original statement that the Risen Christ was the hope of Israel and of the world taught by Moses and proclaimed by prophets. But it was all in vain as regards Agrippa and Bernice. The Herods were magnificent, clever, beautiful. But they were of the earth, earthy. Agrippa said indeed to Paul, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." But it was not souls like his for whom the gospel message was intended. The Herods knew nothing of the burden of sin or the keen longing of souls desirous of holiness and of God. They were satisfied with the present transient scene, and enjoyed it thoroughly. Agrippa's father when he lay a-dying at Cæsarea consoled himself with the reflection that though his career was prematurely cut short, yet at any rate he had lived a splendid life. And such as the parent had been, such were the children. King Agrippa and his sister Bernice were true types of the stony-ground hearers, with whom "the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word." And they choked the word so effectually in his case, even when taught by St. Paul, that the only result upon Agrippa, as St. Luke reports it, was this: "Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN PERILS ON THE SEA.

"And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself."—ACTS xxvii. 1-3.

"And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him."—ACTS xxviii. 16.

THIS chapter terminates our survey of the Acts of the Apostles, and leads us at the same time to contemplate the Apostle of the Gentiles in a new light as a traveller and as a prisoner, in both which aspects he has much to teach us. When St. Paul was despatched to the judgment-seat of Cæsar from the port of Cæsarea, he had arrived at the middle of his long captivity. Broadly speaking he was five years a prisoner from the day of his arrest at Jerusalem till his release by the decision of Nero. He was a prisoner for more than two years when Festus sent him to Rome, and then at Rome he spent two more years in captivity, while his voyage occupied fully six months. Let us now first of all look at that captivity, and strive to discover those purposes of good therein which God hides amidst all his dispensations and chastisements.

We do not always realise what a length of time was consumed in the imprisonments of St. Paul. He must have spent from the middle of 58 to the beginning of 63 as a prisoner cut off from many of those various activities in which he had previously laboured so profitably for God's cause. That must have seemed to himself and to many others a terrible loss to the gospel; and yet now, as we look back from our vantage-point, we can see many reasons why the guidance of his heavenly Father may have led directly to this imprisonment, which proved exceedingly useful for himself and his own soul's health, for the past guidance and for the perpetual edification of the Church of Christ. There is a text in Ephesians iv. 1 which throws some light on this incident. In that Epistle, written when St. Paul was a captive at Rome, he describes himself thus, "I therefore the prisoner *in* the Lord," or "the prisoner *of* the Lord," as the Authorised Version puts it. These words occur as the beginning of the Epistle for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity. Now there is often a marvellous amount of spiritual wisdom and instruction to be gained from a comparison between the epistles and gospels and the collects for each Sunday. All my readers may not agree in the whole theological system which underlies the Prayer Book, but every one will acknowledge that its services and their construction are the result of rich and varied spiritual experiences extending over a period of more than a thousand years. The mere contrast of an epistle and of a collect will often suggest thoughts deep and searching. So it is with this text, "I therefore the prisoner in the Lord." It is preceded by the brief pithy prayer, "Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all

good works, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The words of St. Paul to the Ephesians speaking of himself as the prisoner of God and in God suggested immediately the idea of God's grace surrounding, shaping, constraining to His service every external circumstance; and thus led to the formation of the collect which in fact prays that we may realise ourselves as so completely God's as, like the Apostle, continually to be given to all good works. St. Paul realised himself as so prevented, using that word in its ancient sense, preceded and followed by God's grace, guarded before and behind by it, that he looked beyond the things seen, and discarding all secondary agents and all lower instruments, he viewed his imprisonment as God's own immediate work.

I. Let us then see in what way we may regard St. Paul's imprisonment as an arrangement and outcome of Divine love. Take, for instance, St. Paul in his own personal life. This period of imprisonment, of enforced rest and retirement, may have been absolutely necessary for him. St. Paul had spent many a long and busy year building up the spiritual life of others, founding churches, teaching converts, preaching, debating, struggling, suffering. His life had been one of intense spiritual, intellectual, bodily activity on behalf of others. But no one can be engaged in intense activity without wasting some of the spiritual life and force necessary for himself. Religious work, the most direct spiritual activity, visiting the sick, or preaching the gospel, or celebrating the sacraments, make a tremendous call upon our devotional powers and directly tend to lower our spiritual vitality, unless we seek abundant and frequent renewal thereof at the source of all spiritual vitality and life. Now God by this long imprisonment

took St. Paul aside once again, as He had taken him aside twenty years before, amid the rocks of Sinai. God laid hold of him in his career of external business, as He laid hold of Moses in the court of Pharaoh, leading him into the wilderness of Midian for forty long years. God made St. Paul His prisoner that, having laboured for others, and having tended diligently their spiritual vineyard, he might now watch over and tend his own for a time. And the wondrous manner in which he profited by his imprisonment is manifest from this very Epistle to the Ephesians, in which he describes himself as God's prisoner—not, be it observed, the prisoner of the Jews, or of the Romans, or of Cæsar, but as the prisoner of God—dealing in the profoundest manner, as that Epistle does, with the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith. St. Paul had an opportunity during those four or five years, such as he never had before, of realising, digesting, and assimilating in all their fulness the doctrines he had so long proclaimed to others, and was thus enabled out of the depth of his own personal experience to preach what he felt and knew to be true, the only kind of teaching which will ever be worth anything.

Again, St. Paul designates himself the prisoner of the Lord because of the benefits his imprisonment conferred upon the Church of Christ in various ways. Take his imprisonment at Cæsarea alone. We are not expressly told anything about his labours during that time. But knowing St. Paul's intense energy we may be sure that the whole local Christian community established in that important centre whence the gospel could diffuse itself as far as the extremest west on the one side and the extremest east on the other, was permeated by his teaching and vitalised by his example.

He was allowed great freedom, as the Acts declares. Felix "gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him." If we take the various centurions to whom he was intrusted, we may be sure that St. Paul must have omitted no opportunity of leading them to Christ. St. Paul seems to have known how to make his way to the hearts of Roman soldiers, as his subsequent treatment by Julius the centurion shows, and that permission of the governor would be liberally interpreted when deputies from distant churches sought his presence. Messengers from the various missions he had founded must have had recourse to Cæsarea during those two years spent there, and thence too was doubtless despatched many a missive of advice and exhortation. At Cæsarea, too, may then have been written the Gospel of St. Luke. Lewin (vol. i., p. 221), indeed, places its composition at Philippi, where St. Luke laboured for several years prior to St. Paul's visit in 57 A.D. after leaving Ephesus; and he gives as his reason for this conclusion that St. Paul called St. Luke in 2 Cor. viii. 18, written about that time, "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel," referring to his Gospel then lately published.[1] I think the sugges-

[1] This involves, however, the supposition that St. Luke's narrative had then obtained its more modern name of "the Gospel," which is in my opinion an anachronism. In the earliest writings which refer to apostolic narratives they are simply called the writings or memoirs or commentaries of the apostles, as in Aristides, c. xvi., and Justin Martyr, *Apol.*, i. 67. In Aristides there is one passage in ch. ii. where the word gospel is used, but not in the sense of a special title for a book: "This is taught from that Gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them as being preached; wherein if ye also will read, ye will comprehend the power that is upon it." Irenæus, III. xi. 7, 8,

tion much more likely that St. Luke took advantage of this pause in St. Paul's activity to write his Gospel at Cæsarea when he had not merely the assistance of the Apostle himself, but of Philip the deacon, and was within easy reach of St. James and the Jerusalem Church. St. Luke's Gospel bears evident traces of St. Paul's ideas and doctrine, was declared by Irenæus (*Hær.*, iii. 1) to have been composed under his direction,[1] and may with much probability be regarded as one of the blessed results flowing forth from St. Paul's detention as Christ's prisoner given by Him in charge to the Roman governor.

The Apostle's Roman imprisonment again was most profitable to the Church of the imperial capital. The Church of Rome had been founded by the efforts of individuals. Private Christians did the work, not apostles or eminent evangelists. St. Paul came to it first of all as a prisoner, and found it a flourishing church. And yet he benefited and blessed it greatly. He could not, indeed, preach to crowded audiences in synagogues or porticoes as he had done elsewhere. But he blessed the Church of Rome most chiefly by his individual efforts. This man came to him into his own hired house, and that man followed him attracted by the magnetic influence he seemed to bear about. The soldiers appointed as his keepers were told the story of the Cross and the glad tidings of the

is the earliest I can now recall who uses the word gospel in this technical sense. He speaks there of the Gospel of St. Matthew, etc. But this was in the last quarter of the second century. In the year 57, when Second Corinthians was written, the word gospel was applied to the whole body of revealed truth held by the Church, and not to a book.

[1] Iren., iii. 1: "Luke, also the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him." With respect to the relation between St. Paul and St. Luke, see also Iren., iii., xiv., xv.

resurrection life, and these individual efforts were fruitful in vast results, so that even into the household and palace of the Cæsars did this patient, quiet, evangelistic work extend its influence.[1] Nowhere else, in fact, not even in Corinth, where St. Paul spent two whole years openly teaching without any serious interruption; not even in Ephesus, where he laboured so long that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word; nowhere else, was the Apostle's ministry so effective as here in Rome, where the prisoner of the Lord was confined to individual effort and completely laid aside from more public and enlarged activity. It was with St. Paul as it is with God's messengers still. It is not eloquent or excited public efforts, or platform addresses, or public debates, or clever books that are most fruitful in spiritual results. Nay, it is often the quiet individual efforts of private Christians, the testimony of a patient sufferer perhaps, the witness all-powerful with men, of a life transformed through and through by Christian principle, and lived in the perpetual sunshine of God's reconciled countenance. These are the testimonies that speak most effectually for God, most directly to souls.

Lastly, St. Paul's imprisonment blessed the Church of every age, and through it blessed mankind at large

[1] The subject of Christianity and the household of Cæsarea would form an interesting subject of inquiry did only space permit. I have, however, the less hesitation in passing it over because it has been exhaustively discussed by Bishop Lightfoot in the following places, to which I must refer my readers: *Philippians*, Introduction pp. 1-28, and in dissertations on, pp. 97-102 and 169-76. This is also the subject of an elaborate monograph by Professor Harnack in the *Princeton Review* for July 1878, entitled "Christians and Rome," with which should be compared Schürer's *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, ii. 506-512, and a treatise published by him *Die Gemeindeverfassung der Juden in Rom.*, Leipzig 1879.

far more than his liberty and his external activity could have done in one other direction. Is it not a contradiction in terms to say that the imprisonment of this courageous leader, this eloquent preacher, this keen, subtle debater should have been more profitable to the Church than the exercise of his external freedom and liberty, when all these dormant powers would have found ample scope for their complete manifestation? And yet if Christ had not laid His arresting hand upon the active, external labour in which St. Paul had been absorbed, if Christ had not cast the busy Apostle into the Roman prison-house, the Church of all future time would have been deprived of those masterly expositions of Christian truth which she now enjoys in the various Epistles of the Captivity, and specially in those addressed to the churches of Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossæ. We have now noted some of the blessings resulting from St. Paul's five years' captivity, and indicated a line of thought which may be applied to the whole narrative contained in the two chapters with which we are dealing. St. Paul was a captive, and that captivity gave him access at Cæsarea to various classes of society, to the soldiers, and to all that immense crowd of officials connected with the seat of government, quæstors, tribunes, assessors, apparitors, scribes, advocates. His captivity then led him on board ship, and brought him into contact with the sailors and with a number of passengers drawn from diverse lands. A storm came on, and then the Apostle's self-possession, his calm Christian courage, when every one else was panic-stricken, gave him influence over the motley crowd. The waves flung the ship of Alexandria in which he was travelling upon Malta, and his stay there during the tempestuous

winter months became the basis of the conversion of its inhabitants. Everywhere in St. Paul's life and course at this season we can trace the outcome of Divine love, the power of Divine providence shaping God's servant for His own purposes, restraining man's wrath when it waxed too fierce, and causing the remainder of that wrath to praise Him by its blessed results.

II. Let us now gather up into a brief narrative the story contained in these two chapters, so that we may gain a bird's eye view over the whole. Festus entered upon his provincial rule about June A.D. 60. According to Roman law the outgoing governor, of whatever kind he was, had to await his successor's arrival and hand over the reins of government—a very natural and proper rule which all civilised governments observe. We have no idea how vast the apparatus of provincial, or, as we should say, colonial government among the Romans was, and how minute their regulations were, till we take up one of those helps which German scholars have furnished towards the knowledge of antiquity, as, for instance, Mommsen's *Roman Provinces*, which can be read in English, or Marquardt's *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vol. i., which can be studied either in German or French.[1] The very city where first the new governor was to appear and the method of fulfilling his duties as the Judge of Assize were minutely laid down and duly followed a well-established routine. We find these things indicated in the case of Festus. He arrived at

[1] The governors brought with them regular bodies of assessors, who assisted them like a privy council. There is a reference to this council in Acts xxv. 12 and xxvi. 30. These councils served as training schools in law and statesmanship for the young Roman nobility. See Marquardt, *l.c.*, p. 391.

Cæsarea. He waited three days till his predecessor had left for Rome, and then he ascended to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of that very troublesome and very influential city. Felix then returned to Cæsarea after ten days spent in gaining an intimate knowledge of the various points of a city which often before had been the centre of rebellion, and where he might at any moment be called upon to act with sternness and decision. He at once heard St. Paul's cause as the Jews had demanded, brought him a second time before Agrippa, and then in virtue of his appeal to Cæsar despatched him to Rome in care of a centurion and a small band of soldiers, a large guard not being necessary, as the prisoners were not ordinary criminals, but for the most part men of some position, Roman citizens, doubtless, who had, like the Apostle, appealed unto the judgment of Cæsar.[1] St. Paul embarked, accompanied by Luke and Aristarchus, as the ship, being an ordinary trading vessel, contained not only prisoners, but also passengers as well. We do not intend to enter upon the details of St. Paul's voyage, because that lies beyond our range, and also because it has been thoroughly done in the various *Lives* of the Apostle, and above all in the exhaustive work of Mr. James Smith of Jordanhills. He has devoted a volume to this one topic, has explored every source of knowledge, has entered into discussions touching the build and rigging of ancient ships and the direction of Mediterranean winds, has minutely investigated the scenery and history of such places as Malta where

[1] Roman citizens had the right of appeal no matter where they were born or of what race they came or how humble their lot in life. Mere provincials devoid of citizenship, no matter how distinguished their position, had not that right.

the Apostle was wrecked, and has illustrated the whole with beautiful plates and carefully drawn maps. That work has gone through four editions at least, and deserves a place in every man's library who wishes to understand the life and labours of St. Paul or study the Acts of the Apostles. We may, however, without trenching on Mr. Smith's field, indicate the outline of the route followed by the holy travellers. They embarked at Cæsarea under the care of a centurion of the Augustan cohort, or regiment, as we should say, whose name was Julius.[1] They took their passage at first in a ship of Adramyttium, which was probably sailing from Cæsarea to lie up for the winter. Adramyttium was a seaport situated up in the north-west of Asia Minor near Troas, and the Sea of Marmora, or, to put it in modern language, near Constantinople. The ship was, in fact, about to travel over exactly the same ground as St. Paul himself had traversed more than two years before when he proceeded from Troas to Jerusalem. Surely, some one may say, this was not the direct route to Rome! But then we must throw ourselves back into the circumstances of the period. There was then no regular transport service. People, even the most exalted, had to avail themselves of whatever means of communication chance offered. Cicero, when chief governor of Asia, had, as we have already noted, to travel part of the way from Rome in undecked vessels, while ten years later than St. Paul's voyage the Emperor Vespasian himself, the greatest potentate

[1] Julius is one of those unknown characters of Scripture about whom we would desire more information. He is described as a centurion of the Augustan band, which was the imperial guard, and was always stationed at Rome. Julius may possibly have been an officer of this guard sent out with Festus and now returning back to his duties.

in the world, had no trireme or warship waiting upon him, but when he wished to proceed from Palestine to Rome at the time of the great siege of Jerusalem was obliged to take a passage in an ordinary merchant vessel or corn ship.[1] It is no wonder, then, that the prisoners were put on board a coasting vessel of Asia, the centurion knowing right well that in sailing along by the various ports which studded the shore of that province they would find some other vessel into which they could be transferred. And this expectation was realised. The centurion and his prisoners sailed first of all to Sidon, where St. Paul found a Christian Church. This circumstance illustrates again the quiet and steady growth of the gospel kingdom, and also gave Julius an opportunity of exhibiting his kindly feelings towards the Apostle by permitting him to go and visit the brethren. In fact, we would conclude from this circumstance that St. Paul had already begun to establish an influence over the mind of Julius which must have culminated in his conversion. Here, at Sidon, he permits him to visit his Christian friends; a short time after his regard for Paul leads him to restrain his troops from executing the merciless purposes their Roman discipline had taught them and slaying all the prisoners lest they should escape; and yet once again when the prisoners land on Italian soil and stand beside the charming scenery of the Bay of Naples he permits the Apostle to spend a week with the Christians of Puteoli. After this brief visit to the Sidonian Church, the vessel bearing the Apostle pursues its way by Cyprus to the port of Myra at the south-western corner of Asia Minor, a neigh-

[1] See Josephus, *Wars*, VII. ii. 1. It was exactly the same with Titus, Vespasian's son, after the war ended. He travelled from Alexandria to Italy in a trading vessel. Suet., *Tit*, c. 5.

bourhood which St. Paul knew right well and had often visited. It was there at Patara close at hand that he had embarked on board the vessel which carried him two years before to Palestine, and it was there too at Perga of Pamphylia that he had first landed on the shores of the Asiatic province seeking to gather its teeming millions into the fold of Jesus Christ. Here at Myra the centurion realised his expectations, and finding an Alexandrian transport sailing to Italy he put the prisoners on board. From Myra they seem to have sailed at once, and from the day they left it their misfortunes began. The wind was contrary, blowing from the west, and to make any way they had to sail to the island Cnidus, which lay north-west of Myra. After a time, when the wind became favourable, they sailed south-west till they reached the island of Crete, which lay half-way between Greece and Asia Minor. They then proceeded along the southern coast of this island till they were struck by a sudden wind coming from the north-east, which drove them first to the neighbouring island of Clauda, and then, after a fortnight's drifting through a tempestuous sea, hurled the ship upon the shores of Malta. The wreck took place towards the close of October or early in November, and the whole party were obliged to remain in Malta till the spring season permitted the opening of navigation. During his stay in Malta St. Paul performed several miracles. With his intensely practical and helpful nature the Apostle flung himself into the work of common life, as soon as the shipwrecked party had got safe to land. He always did so. He never despised, like some religious fanatics, the duties of this world. On board the ship he had been the most useful adviser to the whole party. He had exhorted the captain of the ship not to leave a good

haven; he had stirred up the soldiers to prevent the sailors' escape; he had urged them all alike, crew and passengers and soldiers, to take food, foreseeing the terrible struggle they would have to make when the ship broke up. He was the most practical adviser his companions could possibly have had, and he was their wisest and most religious adviser too. His words on board ship teem with lessons for ourselves, as well as for his fellow-passengers. He trusted in God, and received special revelations from heaven, but he did not therefore neglect every necessary human precaution. The will of God was revealed to him that he had been given all the souls that sailed with him, and the angel of God cheered and comforted him in that storm-driven vessel in Adria, as often before when howling mobs thirsted like evening wolves for his blood. But the knowledge of God's purposes did not cause his exertions to relax. He knew that God's promises are conditional upon man's exertions, and therefore he urged his companions to be fellow-workers with God in the matter of their own salvation from impending death. And as it was on board the ship, so was it on the shore. The rain was descending in torrents, and the drenched passengers were shivering in the cold. St. Paul shows the example, so contagious in a crowd, of a man who had his wits about him, knew what to do, and would do it. He gathered therefore a bundle of sticks, and helped to raise a larger fire in the house which had received him. A man is marvellously helpful among a cowering and panic-stricken crowd which has just escaped death who will rouse them to some practical efforts for themselves, and will lead the way as the Apostle did on this occasion. And his action brought its own reward. He had gained influence

over the passengers, soldiers, and crew by his practical helpfulness. He was now to gain influence over the barbarian islanders in exactly the same way. A viper issued from the fire and fastened on his hand. The natives expected to see him fall down dead; but after looking awhile and perceiving no change, they concluded him to be a god who had come to visit them. This report soon spread. The chief man therefore of the island sought out St. Paul and entertained him. His father was sick of dysentery and the Apostle healed him, using prayer and the imposition of hands as the outward symbols and means of the cure, which spread his fame still farther and led to other miraculous cures. Three months thus passed away. No distinct missionary work is indeed recorded by St. Luke, but this is his usual custom in writing his narrative. He supposes that Theophilus, his friend and correspondent, will understand that the Apostle ever kept the great end of his life in view, never omitting to teach Christ and Him crucified to the perishing multitudes where his lot was cast. But St. Luke was not one of those who are always attempting to chronicle spiritual successes or to tabulate the number of souls led to Christ. He left that to another day and to a better and more infallible judge. .In three months' time, when February's days grew longer and milder winds began to blow, the rescued travellers joined a corn ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, and all set forward towards Rome. They touched at Syracuse in Sicily, sailed thence to Rhegium, passing through the Straits of Messina, whence, a favourable south wind springing up, and the vessel running before it at the rate of seven knots an hour, the usual speed for ancient vessels under such circumstances, they arrived at

Puteoli, one hundred and eighty-two miles distant from Rhegium, in the course of some thirty hours. At Puteoli the sea voyage ended. It may at first seem strange to us with our modern notions that St. Paul was allowed to tarry at Puteoli with the local Christian Church for seven days. But then we must remember that St. Paul and the centurion did not live in the days of telegraphs and railway trains. There was doubtless a guard-room, barrack or prison in which the prisoners could be accommodated. The centurion and guard were weary after a long and dangerous journey, and they would be glad of a brief period of repose before they set out again towards the capital. This hypothesis alone would be quite sufficient to account for the indulgence granted to St. Paul, even supposing that his Christian teaching had made no impression on the centurion. The Church existing then at Puteoli is another instance of that quiet diffusion of the gospel which was going on all over the world without any noise or boasting. We have frequently called attention to this, as at Tyre, Ptolemais, Sidon, and here again we find a little company of saintly men and women gathered out of the world and living the ideal life of purity and faith beside the waters of the Bay of Naples. And yet it is quite natural that we should find them at Puteoli, because it was one of the great ports which received the corn ships of Alexandria and the merchantmen of Cæsarea and Antioch into her harbour, and in these ships many a Christian came bringing the seed of eternal life which he diligently sowed as he travelled along the journey of life. In fact, seeing that the Church of Rome had sprung up and flourished so abundantly, taking its origin not from any apostle's teaching, but simply from such sporadic effects, we

cannot wonder that Puteoli, which lay right on the road from the East to Rome, should also have gained a blessing.[1] A circumstance, however, has come to light within the last thirty years which does surprise us concerning this same neighbourhood, showing how extensively the gospel had permeated and honeycombed the country parts of Italy within the lifetime of the first apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ. Puteoli was a trading town, and Jews congregated in such places, and trade lends an element of seriousness to life which prepares a ground fitted for the good seed of the kingdom. But pleasure pure and unmitigated and a life devoted to its pursuit does not prepare such a soil. Puteoli was a trading city, but Pompeii was a pleasure-loving city thinking of nothing else, and where sin and iniquity consequently abounded. Yet Christianity had made its way into Pompeii in the lifetime of the apostles. How then do we know this? This is one of the results of modern archæological investigations and of epigraphical research, two great sources of new light upon early Christian history which have been only of late years duly appreciated. Pompeii, as every person of moderate education knows, was totally overthrown by the first great eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year 79 A.D. It is a curious circumstance that contemporaneous authors make but the very slightest and most dubious references to that destruction, though one would

[1] The accuracy of the Acts in representing Puteoli as the seat of an early church has been amply illustrated by modern investigations. Judaism was flourishing there from the earliest times. In the year 4 B.C. a colony of wealthy Jews was established at Puteoli (Josephus, *Wars*, II. vii. 1). An inscription has been found there commemorating a Jewish merchant of Ascalon named Herod (Schürer's *Jüdisch. Volk.*, I. 234).

have thought that the literature of the time would have rung with it; proving conclusively, if proof be needed, how little the argument from silence is worth, when the great writers who tell minutely about the intrigues and vices of emperors and statesmen of Rome do not bestow a single chapter upon the catastrophe which overtook two whole cities of Italy.[1] These cities remained for seventeen hundred years concealed from human sight or knowledge till revealed in the year 1755 by excavations systematically pursued. All the inscriptions found therein were undoubtedly and necessarily the work of persons who lived before A.D. 79 and then perished. Now at the time that Pompeii was destroyed there was a municipal election going on, and there were found on the walls numerous inscriptions formed with charcoal which were the substitutes then used for the literature and placards with which every election decorates our walls. Among these inscriptions of mere passing and transitory interest, there was one found which illustrates the point at which we have been labouring, for there, amid the election notices of 79 A.D., there appeared scribbled by some idle hand the brief words, "Igni gaude, Christiane" ("O Christian, rejoice in the fire"), proving clearly that Christians existed in Pompeii at that time, that they were known as Christians and not under any other appellation, that persecution and death had reached them, and that they possessed and displayed the same undaunted spirit as their great leader and teacher St. Paul, being enabled like him to rejoice even amid the sevenfold-heated fires, and in view of the resurrection life to lift the victorious pæan, "Thanks

[1] This point is elaborated by Mr. Cazenove in an article on the Theban Legion contained in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, iii. 642.

be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

After the week's rest at Puteoli the centurion marched towards Rome. The Roman congregation had received notice of St. Paul's arrival by this time, and so the brethren despatched a deputation to meet an apostle with whom they were already well acquainted through the epistle he had sent them, as well as through the reports of various private Christians like Phœbe, the deaconness of Cenchreæ.[2] Two deputations from the Roman Church met him, one at Appii Forum, about thirty miles, another at the Three Taverns, about twenty miles, from the city. How wonderfully the heart of the Apostle must have been cheered by these kindly Christian attentions! We have before noticed in the cases of his Athenian sojourn and elsewhere how keenly alive he was to the offices of Christian friendship, how cheered and strengthened he was by Christian companionship. It was now the same once again as it was then. Support and sympathy were now more needed than ever before, for St. Paul was going up to Rome not knowing what should happen to him there or what should be his sentence at the hands of that emperor whose cruel character was now famous. And as it

[1] This interesting inscription will be found in Mommsen, *Corpus of Latin Inscriptions*, vol. iv., No. 679. I described it in the *Contemporary Review* for January 1881, p. 97, in an article on Latin Christian Inscriptions. This inscription fully bears out Lord Lytton in the picture he gives of the introduction of Christianity into the neighbourhood of Vesuvius and Naples in his *Last Days of Pompeii*.

[2] Romans xvi. is a sufficient witness of the intimate knowledge of the Roman Church and its membership possessed by St. Paul. We may be sure that many mentioned in that catalogue written three or four years before found a place in the two deputations who went to meet St. Paul.

was at Athens and at Corinth and elsewhere, so was it here on the Appian Way and amid the depressing surroundings and unhealthy atmosphere of those Pomptine Marshes through which he was passing; "when Paul saw the brethren, he thanked God, and took courage." And now the whole company of primitive Christians proceeded together to Rome, allowed doubtless by the courtesy and thoughtfulness of Julius ample opportunities of private conversation. Having arrived at the imperial city, the centurion hastened to present himself and his charge to the captain of the prætorian guard, whose duty it was to receive prisoners consigned to the judgment of the Emperor. Upon the favourable report of Julius, St. Paul was not detained in custody, but suffered to dwell in his own hired lodgings, where he established a mission station whence he laboured most effectively both amongst Jews and Gentiles during two whole years. St. Paul began his work at Rome exactly as he did everywhere else. He called together the chief of the Jews, and through them strove to gain a lodgment in the synagogue. He began work at once. After three days, as soon as he had recovered from the fatigue of the rapid march along the Appian Way, he sent for the chiefs of the Roman synagogues which were very numerous.[1] How, it may be thought, could an unknown Jew entering Rome venture to summon the heads of the Jewish community, many of them men of wealth and position? But, then, we must remember that St. Paul was no ordinary Jew from the point of view taken by Roman society. He had arrived in Rome a state prisoner, and he was a Roman citizen of Jewish birth, and this at once gave him position entitling

[1] See for proof of this Harnack's article in the *Princeton Review*, quoted above.

him to a certain amount of consideration. St. Paul told his story to these chief men of the Jews, the local Sanhedrin perhaps, recounted the bad treatment he had received at the hands of the Jews of Jerusalem, and indicated the character of his teaching which he wished to expound to them. "For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and speak with me: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain," emphasizing the Hope of Israel, or their Messianic expectation, as the cause of his imprisonment, exactly as he had done some months before when pleading before King Agrippa (ch. xxvi. 6, 7, 22, 23). Having thus briefly indicated his desires, the Jewish council intimated that no communication had been made to them from Jerusalem about St. Paul. It may have been that his lengthened imprisonment at Cæsarea had caused the Sanhedrin to relax their vigilance, though we see that their hostility still continued as bitter as ever when Festus arrived in Jerusalem and afterwards led to St. Paul's appeal; or perhaps they had not had time to forward a communication from the Jerusalem Sanhedrin to the Jewish authorities at Rome; or perhaps, which is the most likely of all, they thought it useless to prosecute their suit before Nero, who would scoff at the real charges which dealt merely with questions of Jewish customs, and which imperial lawyers therefore would regard as utterly unworthy the imprisonment or death of a Roman citizen. At any rate the Jewish council gave him a hearing, when St. Paul followed exactly the same lines as in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia and in his speech before Agrippa. He pointed out the gradual development of God's purposes in the law and the prophets, showing how they had been all fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It was with the

Jews at Rome as with the Jews elsewhere. Some believed and some believed not as Paul preached unto them. The meeting was much more one for discussion than for addresses. From morning till evening the disputation continued, till at last the Apostle dismissed them with the stern words of the Prophet Isaiah, taken from the sixth chapter of his prophecy, where he depicts the hopeless state of those who obstinately close their ears to the voice of conviction. But the Jews of Rome do not seem to have been like those of Thessalonica, Ephesus, Corinth, and Jerusalem in one respect. They did not actively oppose St. Paul or attempt to silence him by violent means, for the last glimpse we get of the Apostle in St. Luke's narrative is this: "He abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him."[1]

[1] The various biographies of the Apostle, and specially that of Conybeare & Howson, follow the Apostle's history in great detail during these two years; but the story of that period more properly falls under the consideration of the writers upon the Epistles of the Captivity than of one dealing with the Acts of the Apostles. If I were to discuss St. Paul's life at Rome I should have simply to borrow all my details from these Epistles. The abruptness of St. Luke's termination of his narrative is very noteworthy, and the best proof of the early date of the Acts. I do not think I need add anything to Dr. Salmon's argument on this point contained in the following words, which I take from chap. xviii. of his *Introduction*: "To my mind the simplest explanation why St. Luke has told us no more is, that he knew no more; and that he knew no more, because at the time nothing more had happened—in other words, that the book of the Acts was written a little more than two years after Paul's arrival in Rome."

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